

**A PASTORAL CARE GRIEF
AND BEREAVEMENT
MANUAL**

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ABSTRACT
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The objective of the project was to assist the griever in their grief process. Thus, moving them to the final stage of the process which includes acceptance and resolve. The methodology used was a five day workshop conducted with members from Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, who loss their pastor as a result of death. The project was integrated and evaluated with pre and post-test, surveys and interviews. The results indicate that on going interventions such as grief workshops and available resources are needed to obtain more measurable and accurate results.

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The author gives Honor to God the Creator, praise to Jesus my Savior and glory to the Holy Spirit my sustainer for protecting, providing, preparing, and anointing me for this ministry. This document is written in loving memory of my son, Marlon DuJuan Holmes, whose spirit lives in all of us who loved him.

There are many people and institutions that made this document live. Among the institutions is Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, which allowed me the opportunity to do the field work needed for the study. The Corinthian Baptist Church family, my home and family church, God bless you, I love you all. To the administrative staff who have encouraged and supported me with various resources, the author could not find elsewhere.

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And now to my immediate family. Words cannot express the emotions I feel as I write for my mother, Mary Knox, who has supported me all of my life, my sisters Fredia, Harriet Cheryl, and Barbara, and my brother, Fred. To my blessed children, Saran, Rakahn, Siedah and grandchild, Bria, I love you. And finally, to my wife, friend, mother of my children and the anchor that holds the family together, Dranoel. I thank God for your love and support for 29 years. I love all of you, may God bless you all.

INTRODUCTION

In viewing his life over the last 48 years, the author was amazed to see how much grief is a part of everyday living. At the tender age of five the death of my best friend, my puppy (Teddy), presented a feeling that was hard to explain. That feeling was grief. Although the author experienced the death of his puppy at an early age, it was years later, after the death of my first son and my father, that the author began to experience and understand the reality of a grief experience.

Grief is a normal healthy response to loss. Grief is a person's internal experience. For many, grief is identified with the emotions and feelings related to the experience of a great loss. Bereavement is the external expression of one's grief. Millions of people grieve daily for various reasons and I am one of them.¹

I was thrust painfully into this arena of grief and bereavement by the death of my first son, Maurice, in 1972, followed by the death of my father in 1973. Subsequently, the pain continued over the years until the death of my second son in 2000. It was in that year I sought assistance for my past and present grief issues.

I finally realized that I was suffering from unresolved grief for more than 20 years. After the death of my second son I, therefore, received effective professional counseling needed to help process and resolve my grief.

¹ "Grieving: Facing Illness, Death and Other Losses"; available from <http://familydoctor.org/handouts/079.html>; Internet; accessed 3/4/2003, 11:00 a.m.

Furthermore, after discovering grief can be resolved through a process, the author questioned if other griever understood that process. When death occurs, the question usually asked is “why?” However, after the death of my second son, Marlon, for the author the question became “what”? What are you going to do about it, Edward? In fact, what does God want from me? The author sought God for an answer. After prayerfully seeking an answer from God, the LORD revealed to me my assignment for the next couple of years. God’s will and my purpose for this chapter in my life were being manifested through my grief experiences.

Finally, I took on the awesome task of researching grief and bereavement in various areas such as in the church, in funeral homes and the griever’s home. As a direct result, this led to the development of this project, which includes grief workshops and a grief and bereavement guide (brochure) to insure other grievers would have a guide to assist them through their process of grief.

Thus, it is the goal of the author to address an area of ministry that has been overlooked, neglected, and in many cases underestimated and misunderstood. It is my prayer that the project will assist the griever in their grief process, which will eventually allow the griever to face their grief, feel their grief, fuel their grief and eventually move toward freedom from their grief.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The author, Edward Robert Knox, was born October 17, 1955 at 4:40 PM at Herman Keifer Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. The author was named after his father, whose name is Robert Edward. My father and mother have deep southern roots. Being from the south, they both had a tendency to use southern clichés, such as “I ain’t stuttin ya”; “never mind” and using the word “duffer” for the word “sofa.” They both cooked southern down home meals, such as greens and cornbread. When family or friends would visit, they always provided southern hospitality. Although we lived in the city, my father raised chickens in the back yard.

As the author reflected on his early childhood years, he remembered having a close bond with his father’s family, which consisted of 12 siblings, including six brothers and six sisters. The family was so large that someone was always dying and funerals were attended often. My father would always take me with him when he visited his other relatives and children. Therefore, I would spend a great deal of my time getting to know them.

Although my father was married twice and fathered six children, three from each previous marriage; and my mother had four children from her previous marriage; I was the first child born to the union of Robert and Mary. For eight years, my mother and father

raised my four sisters Fredia, Harriet, Cheryl, Barbara and two brothers Fred, Mark, and of course myself.

My mother and father separated in the summer of 1963 when I was eight years old, due to my father's alcohol and spousal abuse problems. Through this separation I began to experience grief. According to Lynn Despelder,¹ grief is separation or detachment from someone or something you are attached to.

I remember spending the latter part of the summer with my father at his new apartment. He lived alone and continued to abuse alcohol. I did not want to be there because I felt lonely and there were no children to play with. I would watch television, listen to music and often remind him that I was ready to go home.

Eventually we would go to my Grandma Lee's house where I would play with all my cousins. My grandmother's house was the meeting place where all of my uncles, aunts, and cousins would come and spend time and share stories of the good times. There was always a celebration because it was someone's birthday, a holiday, a wedding, an anniversary, even death; you name it, the Lee family would celebrate.

As the author reflects, the most celebrated event for the Lee family was death. It was death that brought our family together to bond through eating and drinking which was a favorite pastime for the family. My grandmother loved to cook and this allowed the family to grieve together and disclose experiences of relationships with the deceased.

My mother, Mary Knox, was born in Macon, Georgia. She was from a small family consisting of one sister and three brothers. In many ways, her brothers and my brothers and I were similar. We all looked like brothers and were the same ages. My mother had

¹ Lynn Anne Despelder and Albert Lee, *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying* 4th edition (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995).

one older sister who died when I was a teenager and her oldest brother died shortly thereafter. Although the family suffered from unresolved grief, no interventions or closure were discussed.

My maternal grandparents, Walter and Estelle, were married for 54 years. I once asked my grandfather what was his secret to staying married. He replied; “commitment and sacrifice.” He further explained, “you must commit yourself to something, and you must sacrifice something.” Those words of wisdom continue to impact my life today.

I discovered early in life from my grandfather that commitment meant sacrifice. In addition, I realized that prayer was the common thread of my grandparent’s spiritual bond. He always expressed the importance of prayer. He often quoted, “if you want to keep in touch with God, then pray.” My grandfather influenced my life in many respects. The impact he had on me in many ways reflects who I am today. He was a gentle-spirited, loving, committed man who was respected as a man among men.

At the age of nine, I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior and was baptized. Baptism changed my view about life and God. I viewed God as the creator and ruler over everyone and everything, which resulted in a greater respect for God. I realized later in life that the anointing of the God was upon me.

Nevertheless, I fell in love with God and had a desire to be close to Him; therefore I attended church regularly always eager to learn more. I have fond memories of going to church, such as hearing the word, studying the word and playing church as many young people do. Although I was young and did not understand my purpose, I discovered the Lord was calling me. I accepted that call 33 years later. My purpose for serving and living for God was a reality.

As the author reflected on this chapter of his life, he realized that high school presented some of his greatest challenges, including teenage identity, fashion statements, girlfriends, peer pressure and experimenting with drugs. I also participated in several sports activities and began to excel in baseball. The new experiences not only challenged me, but changed me. As a result, I stopped attending church because I figured I no longer could live the life God intended for me to live. As the challenges and changes continued, sin and a couple of death experiences taught the author some valuable lessons concerning life and death.

The author became a teenage parent at age 17 and fathered his first child, a son named Maurice. Although the author's ego and pride were being challenged, he began to remember the words of his grandfather about commitment and sacrifice. At the age of 17, he asked himself could he be committed and could he make some sacrifices. There he was standing in the hallway of decision.

Ultimately, the author made the decision to get a job and support his child. There was little time for teenage fantasies, such as going to all the parties, making fashion statements, even playing baseball. The author had often stated, "If I ever fathered children I would be a responsible father."

The author began working at Jennings Hospital part time as a dishwasher to support his son. Meeting the fulfillment of fatherhood was a great challenge. Unfortunately, six months later the child died of crib death. The author was shocked, crushed and devastated emotionally and spiritually. Questions began to emerge such as; "how could this happen to me? Where was God in all this?" The author did not know how to process or handle death and no one provided resources to assist in coping with death.

Furthermore, he never sought counseling and no one ever suggested counseling. Though unexpected, this tragedy affected him for quite some time. He felt that no one cared and life was not fair. His faith in God began to decrease. The devastation of grief gripped his spirit like nothing he had ever experienced.

I began to hear words such as “you can have another son, you are still a young man.” Statements were made such as “God knows what is best,” or “you will be all right.” Although it sounded good, it did not help heal my broken heart or help process the grief.

The following summer I traveled to New York to find refuge. After a month of teenage indulgence, such as drinking, smoking and partying, I received the tragic news that my father died of pneumonia. Death struck again and the pain of grief resurfaced. I recall the long, lonely bus ride home. Unresolved grief began to multiply; it was compounded.

Two deaths in two years were devastating. I was stunned, depressed, overwhelmed with anger and confusion. Furthermore, I had not recovered from the first death of my son. Again, no one counseled me and I never sought counseling. Although these were some of the most challenging years I had encountered, I was seeking God’s presence and purpose.

After my father died I felt for the first time the desire to live a life of purpose and meaning. I moved from the desire to party and have fun to search for the value of life. In 1975, my second son, Marlon, was born. Three years later, my daughter Saran was born. Subsequently, I decided to marry Dranoel Edwards and we began to raise our family together. Marriage changed my perspective on living. It gave me purpose, value and a greater appreciation for life.

Ultimately, I renewed my membership with the church and my relationship with God. As life began to change, commitment and sacrifice began to take on a life of their own. I was committed to my family and that takes a lot of sacrifice.

Five years later, my son, Rakahn, was born. Five years after that' my daughter, Siedah, was born. Witnessing the birth of our children gave me a deeper understanding, love and reverence for God. Through birth and life, I began to see God's face.

Shortly thereafter, I had a spiritual experience that changed my life forever. The joy of the Holy Ghost filled my life. God's anointing was upon me just as Moses experienced at the burning bush. Instead, the bush was burning within me. I began to reflect upon my baptism at age nine when God first revealed himself to me through his presence. What an awesome experience. God's presence and purpose became clearer.

Afterwards, God led our family to Corinthian Baptist Church under the pastorage of Reverend Dr. Joseph Jordan. While studying the word of God from the Prophet Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto all nations." God spoke those words to into my spirit and I accepted the call into the ministry.

Meanwhile, my maternal grandparents died nine months apart. Shortly thereafter' my paternal grandmother died. Through previous experiences with death, the author realized that losing loved ones is not easy to handle. Although these were times of for the entire family the author was more mature and could now accept death. The death of my grandfather was the most significant and the author began to face the grief and process the deaths.

Moreover, the words often spoken by my grandfather concerning commitment and sacrifice began to penetrate my being. I must say that at that point in my life God was in

touch with me and I was in touch with God. My prayer life began to grow as I continued seek God for direction concerning my ministry and I sensed his ever growing presence. Thus, commitment and sacrifice became a reality.

Meanwhile, at Corinthian Baptist Church I began to serve on the ministerial staff in many capacities. First, as a Deacon, second as Sunday school teacher and finally as minister. Working in various ministries increased my growth educationally and spiritually, which broadened my vision for ministry. The vision was to serve and lead others to Christ.

In 1995, death and grief continued to surface. Tragedy struck when my brother Mark was found dead. The family began to seek my leadership and lean on me constantly for support. I began to lean on the Lord daily. My mother asked me to eulogize my brother, and I was honored, hurt, angry, grieving, and bereaved at the same time.

I accepted his death as an assurance that God was preparing me for greater service. Eulogizing my brother helped me realize that God was preparing me for grief and bereavement ministry. Two years later, I served as Chaplain of United Hospice Care. This allowed me to eulogize and comfort the bereaved. The ministry continued to grow and so was God's presence.

On March 28, 2000 my second son, Marlon, was murdered. I have never experienced such a deep level of spiritual brokenness. No other death impacted my life as much as this one. Emotions such as pain, hurt, confusion, disappointment, frustration and anger emerged. What seemed to be an illusion was in fact a reality. Grief was now the focus and center of my life.

However, my reaction and approach this time was different. I had to face the grief. I had to confront it. I began to feel the intensity of the grief. From this experience, my entire life changed. The entire family was grieving. During the funeral, the author could

see and feel the pain and suffering on the faces of friends and family. There were no counselors or literature recommended to meet the needs of the grieved population.

This experience was a confirmation that God was leading me toward a ministry related to grief and bereavement. Afterwards, I sought grief counseling. Through the grace of God, I was able to process and eventually resolve my grief. Furthermore, at the time I was enrolled in the Pastoral Counseling program at Ashland Theological Seminary. The class I was studying at the time was “Death and Dying.”

Later that year, I began serving as part-time Chaplain at Todd Phillips Home for Boys, as part of my internship program. I served as the bereavement counselor for teens experiencing the death of loved ones. This was the perfect opportunity for me to share my past experiences concerning death as my ministry in counseling began.

In addition, the author could teach and equip individuals with the adequate tools and resources that would assist them through their process of grief. The process was an opportunity for me to share my grief and expand the ministry God had set before me. The process for all of us was educational, painful, emotional, rewarding and yet therapeutic.

Context Analysis

The author began ministry at Corinthian Baptist Church in 1989 under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Joseph Jordan. Since answering the call of God to the ministry in 1991, I have been involved in several ministries that have met the needs of God’s people over the past 11 years. The Holy Spirit led me to develop the Counseling and Pastoral Care ministry under the direction of Dr. Jordan. Thus, the ministry fulfilled some of the pastoral needs of the church.

Serving over the Pastoral Care ministry for two years led to the expansion of work in various ministries within the church, such as such as helping hands, missions, bereavement and comfort ministries. Corinthian Baptist Church located at 1725 Caniff in Hamtramak, Michigan has a history of performing at least two funerals per month, which increases the need for grief and bereavement counseling.

The ministry was designed for two purposes. The first was to educate seniors on how to deal with grief. The second allowed the author to develop social support groups for senior members experiencing grief issues. The ministry continued to grow and other programs developed including the seniors' lunch program sponsored by other churches in the area. In addition, the resources were shared with several sister churches within the area. The growth and expansion of the ministry continues.

Unfortunately, several churches within the district fellowship experienced the death of their Pastors. Members sought resources to deal with their pain and suffering, but only few were available. Many were referred to the author, who tried to meet their needs with limited resources. As a result, a research committee was implemented. However, the committee was disbanded after discovering that only a few resources were available.

Synergy

While reflecting upon my experiences within the context of the church, I looked at the areas of ministry that commanded the most attention. These areas are where I could provide the immediate skills and resources. The author focused on two of the most important and frequent ministries within the context of the church. The two ministries were weddings and funerals. The ministry that required the most attention as well as

intervention was funerals, which required counseling the bereaved before, during, and after the funerals.

Preparation for this ministry began early for the author. The author's first assignment as a minister was to officiate at two funerals. An additional assignment for the author was Nursing Home and hospital care, which offered spiritual and emotional support for bereaved individuals and family members. This also included on-call duties, which consisted of traveling to homes and hospitals to offer comfort, and to guide and support members who experienced the death of a loved one. During the process of ministry, the author would meet members of other churches who asked for prayer and comfort for the loss of their loved ones.

As the author ministered to individuals and families, he began to share their pain and relate to their experience through his own pain. The author discovered that many church members needed immediate resources that were not available. Although grief was expressed, many did not know how to process it. Therefore, the author later discovered that many church members suffered from unresolved grief.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

What is grief?

There are several definitions of grief. According to research by Patrick Hill, “Grief is our reaction to loss; Grief is a person’s internal experience, thoughts and feelings related to the individual experience of a great loss. Grief is a normal process, an intense fundamental emotion, a universal experience which makes us human.”¹

In order to understand grief, we need to make the distinction between grief and bereavement/mourning. Grief leads to a state of bereavement or mourning. Bereavement and mourning are synonymous.

Bereavement disrupts physical functioning, manifesting such reactions as chills, diarrhea, fatigue and profuse sweating. Emotional manifestations include intense and long-lasting reactions such as fear, anger and sorrow. Bereavement affects cognitive functioning (e.g., memory distortions, attention deficits, and ongoing vigilance for danger) and behavior (e.g., sleep disturbances, excessive drinking, increased cigarette smoking, and reckless risk taking).²

¹ Patrick T. Hill and David Shirley, *A Good Death* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1992).

² “Trauma, Loss, & Bereavement”; available at <http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Reece.html>; Internet; Accessed 03/04/2003 at 11:30 a.m.

It impacts social relationships as outsiders to the grief become noticeably uncomfortable when around the bereaved. More importantly, according to studies by David E. Balk, “grief and bereavement affects one’s spirituality by challenging the griever’s assumptions about the meaning of human existence.”³ Mourning is the external expression of one’s grief. Thus, a person may experience extremely painful grief but because of a need to appear stoic, may not mourn.

Grief and bereavement are intensely personal and unique experiences. We often refer to stages of grief as noted by Kubler-Ross, which include denial, depression, anger bargaining and acceptance (see appendix).⁴ These often do not occur in an orderly progression. Depending on the situation or experience of the individual involved, one may not experience some stages, or may cycle in and out of the same emotional state several times. Below the author will define the five stages as noted by Kubler-Ross.

Denial, numbness, and shock—This serves to protect the individual from experiencing the intensity of the loss. Numbness is a normal reaction to an immediate loss and should not be confused with “lack of caring.” Denial and disbelief will diminish as the individual slowly acknowledges the impact of this loss and the accompanying feelings.

Bargaining—At times, individuals may worry excessively about what could have been done to prevent the loss. Individuals can become preoccupied about ways that things could have been done better, imagining all the things that will never be. This reaction can provide insight into the impact of the loss; however, if not properly resolved, intense feelings of remorse and guilt may hinder the healing process.

³ D. E. Balk and N. S. Hogan, *Religion, Spirituality and Bereaved Adolescents* (Amityville, New York: Baywood Publications, 1995).

⁴ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1969).

Depression—After recognizing the true extent of the loss, some individuals may experience depressive symptoms. Sleep and appetite disturbance, lack of energy and concentration, and crying spells are some typical symptoms. Feelings of loneliness, emptiness, isolation, and self-pity can also surface during this phase, contributing to this reactive depression. For many, this phase must be experienced in order to begin reorganizing one's life.

Anger—Thus reaction usually occurs when an individual feels helpless and powerless. Anger may result from feeling abandoned, occurring in cases of loss through death. Feelings of resentment may occur toward oneself, a higher power, or toward life in general for the injustice of this loss. After an individual acknowledges anger, guilt may surface due to expressing these negative feelings. Again, these feelings are natural and should be honored to resolve the grief.

Acceptance—Time allows the individual an opportunity to resolve the range of feelings that surfaces. The grieving process supports the individual. That is, healing occurs when the loss becomes integrated into the individual's set of life experiences. Individuals may return to some of the earlier feelings throughout their life. There is no time limit to the grieving process. Each individual should define one's own healing process.

Pain and Suffering

A common denominator to all grief is some form of suffering. During the development of this project, the author witnessed the emotional pain and suffering of several members from three separate congregations who experienced the loss of their Pastor through death. Several members from each congregation expressed a range of emotions that reflected the relationship each member had with their Pastor. The variations

of emotions depended upon the length of the relationship established, the type of leadership provided to the member, and the type or style of ministry the pastor brought to the church.

There are several emotions associated with grief according to author Stephen Shuchter that include depression, anger, fear, acceptance, numbness, disbelief, shock, and emotional control. All emotions are forms of protection and shield individuals from reality. Although individuals experiencing grief may not display all of the symptoms⁵ immediately, in time they will display one or more of them. The most common symptoms associated with grief include the following:

Symptoms of grief

- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Blaming yourself
- ✓ Crying spells
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Fast heartbeat
- ✓ Feeling like there's a lump in your throat
- ✓ Feeling like what's happening around you isn't real
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Hyperventilating—sighing and yawning
- ✓ Nausea

⁵ Sharon L. Johnson, *Therapist Guide to Clinical Intervention: The 1-2-3's of Treatment Planning* (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 1979).

- ✓ Not being able to get organized
- ✓ Not feeling hungry or losing weight
- ✓ Restlessness and irritability
- ✓ Sadness or depression
- ✓ Seeing images of the dead person
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Tightness in your chest
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Trouble concentrating
- ✓ Trouble sleeping

All of the symptoms mentioned can range from mild to severe. All of them are serious and many of them often lead to some form of depression.

Depression

Depression is common in grief. Although not implied to be more severe than other symptoms listed, depression is usually the first stage experienced in grief according to Clayton, Halikas, and Maurice. Although depression symptoms vary from person to person, they include:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Fatigue or lack of sleep
- Restlessness or slowed movements
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions

Depression is known as the single most common medical disorder encountered by widows and widowers.

The author interviewed the widows of all three churches involved in the research study and discovered all of them experienced depression accompanied by various symptoms of grief such as mood swings, loss of appetite, crying spells, trouble sleeping and anger. The author also discovered somatic symptoms including hopelessness and worthlessness.

According to Clayton in his 1990 research, more than half of all widowed participants had crying spells, sleep disturbances, low mood, loss of appetite, fatigue, and/or poor memory at some time during the first year of bereavement. In general, somatic symptoms gradually improve, whereas psychological symptoms (e.g., hopelessness) persist.

A further study conducted by Blanchard, Blanchard and Becker, also found that somatic symptoms decrease by the end of the first year but that a depressed mood, restlessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, and suicidal thoughts did not subside during that same time frame.

The author discovered various similar symptoms of depression from candidates who were interviewed from three churches who lost their Pastor to death. The symptoms included mood swings, loss of appetite, insomnia, and anger.⁶ The members who received little or no grief intervention, such as counseling or follow-up workshops, experienced a great deal of suffering. As a result, research revealed that 80% of the workshop participants suffered from unresolved grief.

⁶ Stephen R. Shuchter *Dimensions of Grief* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1986).

Common myths about grief

- Children grieve like adults
- Grief is the same after all types of death
- It takes two months to get over your grief
- All bereaved people grieve in the same way
- Your grief will decline over time without any upsurges
- When grief is resolved, it never comes up again
- You and your family will be the same after the death of a loved one
- It is not okay to feel sorry for yourself
- There is no reason to be angry at your deceased loved one
- Men and women grieve in the same ways
- Children need to be protected from grief and death
- You will have no relationship with your loved one after his or her death
- Parents usually divorce after a child dies
- Once your loved one has died, it is better not to focus on him or her but to put him or her in the past and go on with your life

These and other myths can make the process of grieving more painful and difficult by creating unrealistic expectations for your recovery and preventing the griever from seeking the support needed.⁷

⁷ Therese A. Rando, *Grief, Dying and Death* (Chicago, Illinois: Research Press, 1984).

How to grieve

There is no correct or incorrect way to grieve. Grief is a journey, a process that takes time and hard emotional work. It is an individual experience. No one mourns the same way. Some may feel worse early on and some may feel worse months, even years, later. Some experience grief unpredictably—feeling “fine” one minute and in pain another.

Many want to talk about what they are going through, others seem to want to deal with their feelings on their own. The next ten suggestions on how to grieve may help educate the griever, as well as assist them during the grieving process.

1. Feel your feelings fully. Grievers may experience many feelings such as deep sadness, depression, loneliness, guilt, anger, anguish, confusion, relief, emptiness. Whatever the experience, they seem to judge the feeling. Stephen Levine, author and teacher, calls grief “the pain that ends the pain.” Use your emotions to help you heal and to eventually help you live without the person who has now gone. Surrender to your body’s wisdom. If you need to cry, cry. If you need to really wail, do that too. If you need to pound on a pillow or walk and run until you feel exhausted go right ahead. The body will respond to the emotion that is felt if the griever will just give in and not be afraid to feel fully and deeply.
2. Be patient with your body’s physical experiences during grief. The griever may not be able to sleep well or sleep a lot. Some people use food to comfort themselves and eat too much or eat inappropriately while others cannot eat at all. Some people have waves of anxiety wash over them which leaves them feeling nervous or dizzy, some will feel tightness in their chest and feel like they cannot get a deep breath,

some tremble, others feel sick to their stomachs, some feel dry mouthed. These are just some reactions to anxiety. Many people feel listless and unable to concentrate. Some distract themselves with frenetic activity as a way to get away from the feelings. Some people just feel like they are “going crazy.” All of this is a normal reaction to grief. The emotional and physical feelings sometimes last a long time for others it is relatively brief.

3. Give yourself time to grieve. Grief will last as long as it lasts. Many people think they are failing at healing if they cannot seem to reach closure after a certain period of time. They have an expectation of when they should feel better and that expectation can make healing an added burden. There is no simple answer to how long grief lasts. So many variables make no one answer acceptable. Each griever and each situation of loss is unique. Some of the variables include the personality of the griever, whether or not loss has been experienced before, the nature and quality of the relationship before the loss, their own coping mechanisms and support systems, whether the loss was expected or sudden, and whether they feel responsible in some way for that loss.
4. Remember grief is a process and may be a lifelong endeavor. Some grief takes much longer and sometimes it is never really over. A part of us may feel like we will never get over our loss and yet, at the same time, we need to find meaningful ways to live life in new ways and let go of what was. Otherwise, grief takes over, we feel stuck, and our lives become stagnated.

5. Find ways to honor your grief. Allow grief its time. Talk about your feelings or use a journal to record your thoughts and feelings. Do not push yourself to resume all your activities right away. Do not try to replace the loss or the emptiness with activities or people or things; what is lost is not replaceable. Our daily routines and structure can help us move on without them and adjust to the changes brought about in their absence and the grief that followed.
6. Find ways to honor your loved one. Celebrate your memories. Create a story, a poem, or song about the person you cared about who is now gone. Locate photos or other memorabilia that can be collected in a book or special container for safekeeping. Some use candles and fresh flowers as a way to honor the one who has died. Others use a hobby, such as gardening, sewing, woodworking, or creative art expression as a way to create a memorial in honor of the one who is no longer present. All of these are suggestions to help bring comfort as you work through grief and help recognize that the person is still in your memories.
7. Get help if your grief seems unrelenting and you seem unable to let go. In order to cope with the pain of grief, some use drugs or alcohol to ease or numb the pain. Usually this only distorts and/or prolongs the grief and can develop into other problems. Consider a support group, a counselor or clergyperson to talk with. There are excellent books on death and dying and grieving that are enormously helpful, because they let us know we are not alone and will often validate our experiences. As mentioned earlier, grief can last months, even years but if it takes up most of our energy, is still a primary focus and we are unable to function well, then the grief may be stagnated and thus our lives are stagnated. Also note' if the

feeling and symptoms of grief are still quite acute after a year or so that may be an indication that you need to seek help.

8. Expect anniversary reactions. This is not stagnated grief. Special times of the year, such as holidays, birthdays, or the anniversary of the death or divorce, may bring up a flood of feelings for a time. This is normal. Sometimes the flood of feelings comes at odd times. Emotions just wash over you and it may help to do something to honor the person in some way on that occasion.
9. Use grief to assess the way you live. Let grief remind you of the preciousness of life and how precarious it can be. In the blink of an eye, all can change. Live with yourself and with others with this in mind.
10. Let your grief call you to a new way of living. Letting go of past hurts, forgiving, living life fully each day and not taking anyone or anything for granted are some possibilities for beginning anew with a sense of the gift of life. Let grief teach about the meaning of life and love. It can be a difficult teacher, and quite a wise one.⁸

The Benefits of Grief

There are several benefits for the griever who must yield to grief in order to effectively begin the healing process. The first benefit of grief is that it allows us to be honest with ourselves and honest with God. If we allow ourselves to grieve, it liberates us

⁸ www.brandywinepastoral.org/body-publhtml; Internet; Accessd on 8/26/2003 at 3:00 a.m.

to the point where we can be open to disclose and express our feelings overall. Thus it allows us to view ourselves as God views us.

Personal growth often comes out of loss. Many participants stated that, after their experience, they had growth in areas they would not have grown in otherwise. Better understanding of oneself is a common result for those who experienced grief. The three most important aspects are understanding their strengths, their weaknesses and their limitations.

Another important benefit of grief is remaining healthy during the process. When we are able to grieve properly, we are less susceptible to physical ailments. For example, if a griever suffers from asthma during time of grief, asthma attacks may become more acute and more frequent. If the griever has an ailment that is severe, such as cancer, the griever may not want to live anymore because their loved one is no longer there.

Educational opportunities are a valuable benefit for many experiencing grief and bereavement. The griever learns from experience what grievers and supporters should and should not be doing during this critical hour. The story was recorded of a deacon at Gath Baptist Church in McMinnville, Tennessee whose wife died of incurable liver cancer. The deacon received comfort and compassion up to and during the funeral. Immediately after the funeral, however, the phone calls and visits stopped. The deacon was hurt and angered by what he considered a lack of concern, but has since learned that it was not intentional.

He began to read books on death and the grieving process. In addition to learning where he was in the process, he began to get a better understanding “of what people should be doing but were afraid to do.” Instead of letting his anger drive him to leave the church and never tell anyone why, the deacon addressed the deacon board three weeks after his wife’s death and told them his concerns and how he felt about their lack of

response. They were upset that they had not done anything, the deacon discovered. He also realized he had gone too far with the deacons and later apologized. In additional reading, he learned that it would have been appropriate for him to call friends and tell them he needed someone to talk to.

The main thing he discovered about the participants of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is that they all “needed the presence of someone, someone to talk to, someone to share feelings with, and not be uncomfortable with”

The author discovered that what happened was not a unique situation, but is symptomatic of churches of all denominations. People just do not know what to do or say. People want to get involved, but they are afraid they will say the wrong thing. This leads to the next benefit, which is the development of ministry.

As a result of crisis and education, the deacons of Gath church began to discuss what they could do in terms of ministry to others who would face crisis. The grief-stricken deacon stepped in to do his part to see that no one else in the church would have to go through a similar experience.

The participants of the Pleasant Grove church after the third workshop discussed what they could do in terms of ministry. As a result, the grief and bereavement ministry was developed. One member stated, “unless we make an attempt to get involved with them in their grief, there is a good possibility they will fall by the wayside and we will not know why they left the church.”

The author began to reflect upon his own personal experience of how grief was dealt with in the past and to compare it to how he dealt with the recent death of his son. Using a different approach and responding effectively can make all the difference in the world. As an unbeliever, the author’s response was self-help and self-medication.

However, as a believer in Christ, the grief allowed him to draw closer to God and the testimony of his written word, increasing his faith and trust in God. For the believer, this is one of the greatest benefits of grief.

The author reflected on how David was able to resolve his feelings of grief through the knowledge of the salvation of his child, and return to the house of worship. After David's child was struck by the Lord, he became ill. David fasted and prayed for many days and nights. According to 2 Samuel 12:15-23 "After the child died David got up from the ground washed and anointed himself he went into the house of the LORD and worshipped. When asked why are you acting this way David replied, "can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."⁹

Further reflection reveals that Jesus recognized mourning and grief as valid emotions, but that grief is always accompanied by a commensurate joy. John 16:20 states "I tell you the truth you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn into joy."¹⁰ What a comforting affirmation.

Finally, it is the believer's faith in God and the hope of heaven that helps us deal with grief, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14: "Brethren, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."¹¹

⁹ 2 Samuel 12:20-23; All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰ John 16:20

¹¹ 1 Thessalonian 4:13,14

Pastoral Care and Counseling

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. Proverbs 20:5 KJV¹²

There is a tremendous need for Pastoral Care and Counselors in the areas concerning grief. Offering effective and non-judgmental pastoral care to the bereaved is a task for a Pastor who possesses the skills of a Professional Counselor. There is a great danger with those who seek help from anyone other than a professional. Counseling from a licensed professional, such as a Counselor or Chaplain, can provide and stimulate growth and development to help the bereaved cope more effectively with the loss.

The Counselor or Chaplain who follows the example of Jesus must show compassion, mercy and love, while facilitating effective non-judgmental pastoral care. The Counselor or Chaplain must also provide unconditional love and offer care that is sensitive to the needs of the grieved.

Additionally, the Counselor or Chaplain can provide prayer and comforting scriptures, as well as help increase the faith of the individual. The Counselor or Chaplain should also refer the grieved to a professional Doctor or Psychiatrist or have one on staff who can provide the medical attention needed for the individual.

The counselor can provide the proper diagnosis, implement treatment plans, and provide additional therapy that will help make some adjustments and stabilize their thought processes if needed. Moreover, the counselor can help facilitate the griever through the grief process.

¹² Proverbs 20:5

Finally, the best skill a counselor possesses to assist a grieving member is the ability to listen. More fifty percent of the participants the author interviewed stated “they wanted the opportunity to talk, share express, cry and have someone who would just listen and care.” They did not necessarily want a response, just an ear.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

“Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)

The Holy Spirit’s role in the life of the believers has many functions. The role of comforting the spirit is the one a believer depends on when experiencing grief. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, which in Greek is called *Parakletos*, meaning intercessor, counselor, advocate and comforter. The verb *paraklysis* means solace, comfort, consolation, exhortation and entreaty refers to God comforting us in our distress and mourning.

The participants of the workshops, all believers in Christ, expressed that there is a greater spiritual healing and comfort that comes from the Holy Spirit. Also, for many, it is the Holy Spirit that leads and guides them through their grief experience. However, three workshop participants who were raised in the church expressed that during their grief experience their religion and faith were shattered. Subsequently, this delayed the acceptance of the loss of their Pastor.

The believer calls on their Christian experience that assures them that God through the Holy Spirit will provide spiritual and emotional support to assist them through their grief process. Subsequently, the believer uses scripture as a textbook testifying to what God has done for others such as healing and deliverance. As one believer stated, “it is in the (Bible) textbook we the believers will find refuge, peace, assurance and comfort.”

Furthermore, the believer uses prayer as a form of communication to God through the Holy Spirit, which gives them a sense of peace, assurance and comfort.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 helps the believers affirm their faith for it states, “we need not grieve as those who have no hope.” Since we have hope and God’s presence, we are freed to grieve deeply, to experience our losses. As a believer and griever, the author contends it is our relationship with God and our faith that prepares us to grieve deeply.

Jesus said, “And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”¹³ The Holy Spirit does comfort and console us in our loss, if we avail ourselves of this experience.

Unresolved or Unsuccessful Grief

Unresolved grief is common in today’s society, as it was in ages past. When grief is unresolved, it can lead to denial, anger, bargaining, acute anxiety and depression. Unfortunately, unresolved grief can affect a person’s physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and psychological behavior. Avoidance is a common denominator as it relates to unresolved grief.

In a recent study for psychological intervention concluded by Edward J. Callahan, Ph.D. reveals that

. . . human grieving can be understood by considering behavior associated with traumatic aversive events. Classically conditioned stimuli associated with the deceased were once predominantly positive, but may now provoke uncomfortable physiological, behavioral, and cognitive change as known conditioned emotional responses (CERs).

Continued exposure to CERs results in a diminution of the disruptive power of these stimuli. Avoidance of the stimuli leaves the disruptive power stimulus intact; this disruption can even increase

¹³John 14:16

over time. Those who experience loss that is out of the normal developmental sequence and those who learn avoidance as a primary coping technique may be particularly vulnerable to unresolved grief.

Individuals who cope using avoidance may fail to experience and hence work through their loss. Under such circumstances, a pronounced focus on bodily symptoms may occur, making presentation to primary care a possible course for unresolved grief.¹⁴

There are several treatments and interventions available for unresolved grief such as medication and counseling. According to R.W. Ramsey a noted counselor:

... the basic rationale for treatment of unresolved grief is similar to that of the rationale for flooding procedures. Flooding involves prolonged exposure to intense stimuli which had been avoided. Through exposure, these stimuli lose their power and adaptive functioning returns.

Flooding is a corrective procedure used when excessive avoidance and escape prevents the griever from prolonged exposure to the feared stimuli, thus maintaining disruption of behavior. Flooding requires moderated presentation of aversive events with gradually increasing exposure. Moderation maintains the cooperation of the patient.¹⁵

A therapeutic rationale to enlist the patient is a key part of the treatment plan:

“Wounds fail to heal if not adequately cleaned and exposed to air. If you continue with that wound unexposed and avoid the cleaning process, the wound can deepen and fester. With unresolved grief it is important to open the wound by exposure to many reminders of the loss. This painful exposure will lead step by step to thorough and healthy healing.”

Critical to this therapeutic rationale is that it counters accepted theory about loss. The Freudian notion was “that one had to end attachment to the person who died in order to make a successful adjustment to life.”¹⁶ “An alternate rationale is to attach to the

¹⁴ “Psychological Intervention for unresolved Grief”; Available at www.ncptsd.org/publications/cq/v5/n2-3/callahan.html; Internet; Accessed 9/30/2003 at 3:00 a.m.

¹⁵ R. W. Ramsey, *Bereavement: A behavioral treatment of pathological grief* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia* (New York: University Press, 1994).

deceased so they no longer need to be avoided: Saying hello again rather than saying good bye. Through discussion the therapist helps the griever recall what was special about the lost relationship so that the loss can be more fully appreciated. Discussion of the relationship facilitates exposure to stimulus associated with the loss” according to Marvin White.¹⁷

Further therapeutic research reveals patients with unresolved grief may have suicidal ideation or plans. These need to be determined early in the therapeutic relationship to ensure development of a safe environment for flooding. A written contract may not be needed, but it is important to obtain at least verbal agreement that the patient will not hurt him or herself without first calling the therapist. Thus, the therapist must be available to the patient in a controlled fashion should a crisis arise. The patient can agree to write out antecedents and potential coping efforts whenever a suicidal thought arises as a bridging step in this process aimed toward greater patient self-control. Patients can use this process to increase their understanding of their urges to hurt themselves and to decrease the need to call the therapist. Contacting and writing can serve as therapeutic tools for fighting against avoidance.

Resolving Grief and Bereavement

The problem many 21st century griever struggle with is that they do not know how to cope with grief or effectively process it. As a Pastoral Counselor, I contend that, in order to effectively cope with, process and resolve grief, three interventions are necessary. First, a professional counselor to help with the psychological and emotional aspects of

¹⁷ Marvin White, “Saying Hello Again: The incorporation of the lost relationship in the resolution of grief,” *Dulwich Centre Newsletter*, Adelaide, South Australia.

grief. Second, a spiritual leader to promote spiritual stability. Last, resources which will give the griever options to explore.

Kubler-Ross' final phase of the process in dealing with loss is acceptance. The final goal for the griever to achieving resolution is acceptance. The author feels that after acceptance is achieved there are several important components needed to effectively process grief. The author has developed a four-step process, which the author calls the 4f process. The 4f process includes facing, feeling, fueling, and freeing the grief. The methods should be facilitated in a group session or individual sessions by a licensed professional, such as a counselor or chaplain.

1. Grievers need to face the grief:

The griever needs to recognize their responsibility and respond with action. The individual griever can face their grief through courage, emotional maturity and faith. When we face grief we must have the courage and willingness to accept, acknowledge and cope with the reality of the grief. Judy Tatelbaum states, "acknowledgement can be the antidote to denial and secondly, courage is one the greatest assets we can possess for facing life and death."¹⁸

The author contends that having the courage to confront death inevitably means that we examine our lives, our values, our ideas, our sense of meaning and, more importantly, our faith. As a direct result, we will begin to re-examine our purpose for living through the experience. Subsequently, this leads us to trust and faith in God. Then, facing grief becomes easier.

¹⁸ Judy Tatelbaum *The Courage to Grieve* (New York: Lippincott & Crowell Publishers, Inc., 1980).

2. Grievers need to feel the grief:

Feeling the pain of grief is therapeutic. Expressing and sharing of feelings are important. Grievers need to know the importance of this expression of feelings and how therapeutic it is. Feeling leads to healing. It is rare that only one or a few emotions are present. In fact, they are multiple and vary with time. Tears and crying are the first feelings expressed during this period. Depression and thoughts of suicide are common. Feelings of abandonment, loneliness, sexual dysfunctions of various kinds and guilt are common. Joan Guntzelman states “unexpressed emotions do not disappear, they go underground and resurface and affect us in other ways. We miss the wisdom of our emotions the healing they can bring to our experience.”¹⁹ Therefore, grievers need to feel what is present, take the time to be aware of what they are feeling and express it. This allows healing to begin.

3. Grievers need to fuel the grief:

Fuel burns and allows the process to move forward. We must allow the fuel of grief to burn our innermost feelings to cleanse us of the hurt and pain. Fueling is the purifier. The grief can be fueled by a professional grief counselor and support groups, including family members. With proper ventilation and facilitation, this process will allow the griever to express all of their feelings and will provide the capacity to cope with them as they are disclosed.

We often deny our ambivalent feelings and idealize the loved one instead. We remember just the good things and deny that we had bad experiences with the loved one. (This was the case with the church and the death of the Pastor; no one talked about negative or bad experiences). There comes a time when every griever should unload every

¹⁹ Joan Guntzelman, *God knows Your Grieving* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2001).

emotion that they are feeling. The expression of all of one's emotions is important for it cleanses the spirit and body of the griever.

There are many who grieve over someone they did not like. Feelings of hate and resentment are suppressed when they should be disclosed. John James states in *The Grief Recovery Handbook* that "truth is the key to recovery. The essence of recovery is contained in the premise of being totally honest about ourselves in relation to others."²⁰ Many times, these feelings are never expressed. They must be fueled in order for the healing process to begin.

The griever needs to pour out their heart to God. Tell God exactly how they feel. It is okay to get angry with God. Job expressed his feelings, pain, and suffering in Job 7:11. He states: "Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." God blessed Job for speaking his mind. After we talk it over with God, then we are prepared to free the grief.

4. Grievers need to free the grief:

The griever starts to surrender to reality. They need to begin the process of letting go of the grief, facing reality and moving on. One important goal in grief, according to John Naperkoski "is for the survivor to transfer the deceased from the place of reality they formerly occupied in their life to one of memory."²¹ This final stage is critical for recovery. The healing has begun at this stage.

²⁰ John James and Russell Friedman, *The Grief Recovery Handbook* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 1998).

²¹ Ibid., 15.

One now has the faith to know that recovery is a reality and that the focus is not death, but life. It is time to process a more structured, organized, healthy, active, social, hard working, positive, and purposeful life.

There are many more simple solutions that can assist the griever in their process. Listed below are twenty-five suggestions by Marylou Hughes from Bereavement and Support that can help people through their grief experience.

1. Be patient with yourself. Do not compare yourself to others. Go through the mourning process at your own pace.
2. Admit you are hurting and go with the pain.
3. Apply cold or heat to your body, whichever feels best.
4. Ask for and accept help.
5. Talk to others.
6. Face the loss
7. Stop asking, "Why?" Instead ask, "What will I do now?"
8. Recognize that a bad day does not mean that all is lost.
9. Rest.
10. Exercise.
11. Keep to a routine.
12. Introduce pleasant changes into your life
13. Know that you will survive.
14. Take care of something alive, such as a plant or a pet.
15. Schedule activities to help yourself get through weekends and holidays.
16. Find someone who needs your help.
17. Accept your feelings as part of the normal grief reaction.

18. Postpone major decisions whenever possible.
19. Do something you enjoy doing.
20. Write in a journal.
21. Be around people.
22. Schedule time alone.
23. Do not overdo.
24. Eat regularly.
25. Pray and meditate²²

²² <http://www.survivingsuicide.com/grief.htm>; Internet; Accessed 9/30/2003 at 4:00 a.m.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

One of society's greatest problems is the drastic need for grief education. It is through education that many of the bereaved are prepared to cope with death. Death is a universal experience shaped by the values and attitudes of the culture, which depends on the particular time and place. More importantly, value structures, religious beliefs, age, ethnicity and the mode of death impact how a person experiences grief.

In the view of some cultures, grief is expressed in different ways to provide closure. Consider the Asian way of grief. The Japanese ritual of responding to death is usually referred to as "ancestor worship" in English. It is a series of rituals performed by survivors lasting between 33 and 50 years after someone has died. Rituals for the first 49 days accomplish grief work.¹

The Muslim perspective of grief is different. The Qur'an says "every soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense." In this culture, parents talk about death, teachers talk about it, and poets write about it. It is part of culture and faith.²

¹ Dennis Klass and Robert E. Goss, "Asian Ways of Grief," in Hospice Foundation of America, *Living With Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve* (Washington, DC: HFA Publications, 1998).

² Shukria Alimi Raad, "Grief: A Muslim Perspective," in Hospice Foundation of America, *Living With Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve* (Washington, DC: HFA Publications, 1998).

In many older European traditions, there has been a custom of having the close relatives each throw a shovel full of earth on the casket at the internment. In South America, they celebrate the dead with a weeklong celebration. In the Middle Eastern tradition, grief was often suppressed. In Africa, the corpse is carried through the community, and the celebration (bereavement) can last from 6 months to a year.

Even in America, the younger generation will pour a libation of an alcoholic beverage on the ground or the grave of the dead as a memorial. Although the traditions are different, for many the results are therapeutic.

Although many ethnic groups grieve out of tradition or their cultural experience, the author contends that many do not know how to process grief within their culture, simply because grief has been misunderstood. Many traditions may be considered outdated or taboo. In many cultures, people have not been taught, exposed to the methods, or familiar with the grief process. What we are taught are usually myths. Therefore, the need for grief education increases.

According to Dr. Diane Hudson, we need to be aware of culture, language and communication modes, physical environment, appearance, worldview, family lifestyles, including social interaction and kinship, religious orientation, educational factors, and food uses.

As I began researching grief and bereavement, I was reminded of my own culture, language, religion, family lifestyle, education and personal experiences in grief and loss over the years. The major differences are maturity, family lifestyle, religious faith and education. What I was taught or not taught impacted my perspective on life, death and grief.

As I reflected upon the death of a six-month-old son in my teen years, I was told, “don’t worry, every thing will work out. You can have more children.” Clichés and myths do not resolve the pain and suffering. Neither does it help bring resolve or recover from grief. The fact is that I was never exposed to the grieving process or taught how to grieve. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to grieve until 30 years later. Furthermore, the loss of my 24-year-old son in my mid-forties provoked me to take a closer look at how to effectively recover from grief. Ultimately, this helped me realize the need for more research and available resources the area of grief and bereavement. I contend that, as a community, we need to be prepared to assist in this critical area of grief.

Historical

The history of grief can be traced back as far the beginning of creation. In primitive times, death was viewed as a natural occurrence. It was expected and accepted by many cultures and religions, which made grief and bereavement easier to cope with.³

In Biblical times, the term often to represent grief used was “mourning,” which shared a variety of customs including weeping and screaming in an excessive manner; wearing dark-colored garments; songs and shouts of lamentation; funeral feast; hired mourners; the disuse of perfumes, oils and fine food, and the use of ashes, and coarse food and clothes. The time of mourning lasted from 7 to 30 days and included outward expression of sorrow for the dead, and also signs of repentance.

Charles Zastrow writes in his book *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment* “people in primitive societies handle death better than today’s

³ Charles Zastrow and Karen K. Ashman, *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment* (Chicago, Illinois: Nelson Hall Publishing, 1995).

society.”⁴ They were more apt to view death as a natural occurrence, partly because they had a shorter life expectancy. They also frequently saw friends and relatives die. Because they viewed death as a natural occurrence, they were better prepared to handle the death of their loved ones.

In Neanderthal burials more than 50,000 years ago, food, ornamental shells and stone implements were buried with the dead, implying a belief that the dead would find such items useful during their passage from the land of the living to the dead. It is clear from evidence such as the Neanderthal burials that speculation about death and orderly practices for the grieving date from the earliest human societies.

Modern models and theories began with Sigmund Freud when he referred to emotions such as melancholia as mourning, meaning that one is searching for an attachment that has been lost. In the 1940s, Lindemann’s work is considered a milestone of ideas about bereavement. His study was based on his intervention with 100 bereaved individuals, following the deaths of family and friends in a nightclub fire. From his study, Lindemann proposed six characteristics of acute grief. Lindemann has provided a model and frame of reference that allows on considering grief as work, with specific tasks to accomplish.

Bowlby’s Attachment Theory is another important landmark in this field of study. In three volumes entitled *Attachment and Loss*, he explores instinctive and attachment behavior of humans and animals, the course of development (ontogeny) of human attachment, an ethnological approach to human fear, and the trauma of loss.

⁴ Ibid.

The most recognized historical was a study mentioned previously by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross was popular during the late 60's. Her landmark contribution, *On Death and Dying*,⁵ came at a time in the history of the United States when stage approaches to psychological theorizing were acceptable and death was a taboo subject. She opened the doors to discussion and acknowledgement of death and to addressing the loss experience.

Biblical

A Biblical image of grief is illustrated in several books, which include the books of Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Job. Grieving was expressed in many different ways by various cultures from Genesis to Revelations. The book of Genesis illustrates Abraham weeping and mourning when Sarah died for it is natural to grieve over the loss of a beloved companion. Genesis 23:2 "And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." Abraham mourned and wept openly which helps us to understand that grieving and mourning is natural.

Similarly, Jacob mourned at the loss of his son Joseph where comfort was initiated but Jacob refused Genesis 37:34, 35. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, for I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

This illustration reveals that the deep inner grief of a person may be shown outwardly. In Old Testament days, the torn garment and the wearing of the sackcloth were

⁵ Theresa A. Rando, *Grief, Dying and Death* (Chicago, Illinois: Research Press Company 1969).

common signs of mourning. The loss of Jacob's son reveals to us that grief can be so intense that it almost can bring death to the mourner.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:4 "blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." The greatest comforter, Jesus our Lord and Savior, wept at Lazarus' grave, which proves that all of us weep and mourn and it is therefore all right to shed tears. Personally, I experienced mourning and comfort from God. Although the losses were painful, I contend that God was preparing me for the ultimate journey.

The most frequently and commonly used illustrations of grief are found in the book of Job. Job's experience with death is found nowhere else in the world. From the beginning of the book until its conclusion, we observe Job's challenge with his many encounters with grief. The book of Job presents a modern day story of life.

There are many people who are presently going through many of the trials seen in the Book of Job. Equally real are the attitudes and actions seen in Job's friends. Modern society always had those who desperately try to assist the grieving person and soon discover they are not equipped to give appropriate advice.

The Biblical text tells us of the servant Job, who is, "Blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil"(Job 1:2). Job is described as a man who was respected among his peers, loved by his family and financially stable. In today's language, he would be called the ideal man who "has it going on," but something disastrous happened. Without warning, Job's world began to crumble. I contend that Job's grief can best be described as compound or acute grief.

Theological

Many scholars and theologians question the grief Job suffered, but like Job, they have no right to question God's purpose. Furthermore, we must understand, as Jesus reminds us, that God's will was being done even through Job's grief. The mysteries and revelations of God often surface during our hour of grief and suffering. Theological questions are often raised concerning suffering and grief. The most commonly asked question is: if God loved me, why did this death occur? Could God have prevented it from happening? Mourners ask: where God is in our grief and suffering? Why does God permit grief and mourning? I believe God does not want us to always ask or understand, but wants us to trust, believe, and know that he is God!

During our grief and suffering, God arrests our attention, speaks to us and gives specific instructions. The Lord spoke to the prophet Ezekiel and told him that his wife, the desire of his eyes, would succumb to a sudden death. Yet Ezekiel was not to mourn openly, but to remain silent (Ezekiel 24:15-24). Why did God ask Ezekiel to do something that seems so unfair, difficult and unnatural? He wanted to illustrate to the people of Jerusalem that, just as the prophet's delight was taken from him, so also their delight, the temple, would be taken from them. God has a purpose. There is always a lesson from God. Therefore, we must acknowledge God in all things, understanding why he allows death, which results in grief and mourning. I believe God is involved in the life of all humanity through empathy.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Corinthian church of three specific prayers for physical healing that were never answered, "but he said unto me, my grace is

sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (II Cor. 12:9 NIV) I understand God saying, theologically, it’s okay to be human, to suffer and grieve.

Where was God when Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, died on the cross? Could God have prevented that from happening? Does God suffer? Does God grieve? Jesus’ death on the cross was not a result of loss, but in fact, was a result of love. John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” Not all of God’s creatures become attached through love. Mankind is the only creature that becomes attached through love. Mitchell and Anderson remind us “the work of grief can change our belief system about God.” The principle theological question when confronted by loss and grief is not why we suffer, but who suffers with us? The affirmation that God suffers with us shifts our focus and belief. The question which grief raises is not about God’s power or goodness, but about God’s faithfulness. Although I agree with this profound statement, the question remains—are we faithful to God?

In summary, humanity, through its limited knowledge, tries to understand God’s purpose for our suffering through grief. I contend that our faith and trust in God is being tested through the process, which eventually helps build character. I am also reminded that when we take the Lord’s Supper, we grieve for Christ’s death. Moreover, as we celebrate the death of our risen Christ, we have hope that there is recovery from bereavement and grief. It is through Christ we can recover from any challenge.

Theological Reflection

Nehemiah in the Old Testament reading told the people not to mourn or weep about the law because God was showing his love for his people by giving them laws to

help keep them safe. Nehemiah refers to the fact that God saw the people's afflictions under the Pharaoh of Egypt and opened the Red Sea for them.

There are a number of places in the Bible where people were given permission to grieve, to be sad, to mourn over the loss of a loved one. As Jesus stated in the New Testament, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Christians who believe that it is not appropriate to grieve need to hear and understand that message.

Because of his own grief experience, the author believes that it is sometimes through mourning that we are able to find the peace and comfort God has for us. Therefore, we must learn that it is all right to grieve. We need to discover that grieving is good for us, mentally and spiritually, if processed properly.

When death invades our lives, our homes and our hearts, often the question is asked, why is this happening to me? There are some who ask, where is God in this experience? My theological reflection is that God is the same place he was when his only begotten son met death at the cross. I believe that God was rejoicing at that time. God in his infinite wisdom knew that through the death of his son believers would have eternal life. God's will was being done on earth and heaven could now rejoice. In fact, God surely grieved when his son left home, but his grief was now over because his son was back home.

Joan Guntzelman stated in her book "God knows you are grieving, do you know God is grieving. I have discovered through my personal grief experience that when we grieve God grieves with us. Isaiah 53:10 says "yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him: he

hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul, an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.”⁶

I believe if we respond to God as Jesus would in the midst of death’s pain, suffering and afflictions, God will see us through. This allows us to understand that God responds to our grief. Finally, we will begin to see God as the Prophet Isaiah saw and understand that when someone, dies the vision becomes clearer. “In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne; he was high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1 KJV).

⁶ Guntzelman, *God Knows You’re Grieving*.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGIES

The hand of God began to guide this project as the author designed and initiated it. The research for this project began with the selection of the Professional and Context Associates. Three Professional Associates were chosen based on their experience, education and the resource needs of the author and the project.

Dr. Oliver Johnson (Ph.D.) was chosen because of his experience in the field of teaching, and extensive counseling background in grief assessment. Dr. Edward Roberts (M.D.), a noted psychiatrist, was chosen because of his background in the field of psychiatry for more than thirty years. Dr. Jerome Washington (Ph.D.), pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, former schoolteacher and counselor, was chosen because of his background work in education, and counseling. In addition, Dr. Washington provides the theological and spiritual dimension needed for the project.

In early December 2002, the author met with the chosen context and Professional Associates as the project began to take on a life of its own. The author met with each Associate individually to clarify their roles and assignments concerning the project. Afterwards, the entire team met as a group to introduce themselves and pray for the success of the project.

A variety of suggestions by the Professional Associates to the author focused on materials needed for workshop participants. The team began to share ideas about materials

with which they were familiar, which led to the selection of books and designing the curriculum for the sessions. During the next meeting, the group would decide and choose which materials would be used for the project.

Extensive research continued by the author who began reading and reviewing textbooks, manuals, periodicals and therapist guides. The workshop material chosen for the project was Sharon L. Johnson's mental health professional book entitled, *Therapist's Guide to Clinical Intervention*¹ (Appendix A-K).

The second session held with context and Professional Associates consisted of the development of the church survey. The associates were given a handout of pages 18-21 from John Creswell's book, *Research Design*, and asked to review them. Afterwards, the group shared ideas, which led to the development of questions.

The questions for the survey were open- and closed-ended. In addition, the questions measured the attitudes and behaviors of the participants. Therefore, the methods used for the questions were qualitative, quantitative and mixed. The design for the project was pre and post tests, surveys, and interviews.

The Professional Associates were asked to research, prepare and review questions for the pre and post test and submit them to the author at the next session. An example of previous survey questions was passed out to each associate for review. The Professional Associates suggested that the author consider interviewing two additional churches for comparison analysis.

¹ Sharon L. Johnson, *Therapist's Guide to Clinical Intervention* (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 1997).

The author followed the suggestion concerning additional churches for comparative analysis. The author also contacted two funeral home directors to research how grieverers processed grief before, during, and after the funeral.

The next session included the development of the pre and post test. These tests would gauge where the participants were in their grief process and determine the results of the workshop sessions. After reviewing all of the questions, ten questions were selected from the twenty-nine questions submitted. The methods used for these questions were qualitative and quantitative. Using the same strategy, questions were completed for the final interviewing of workshop participants, funeral home directors, grief in family loss and church interviews for comparative analysis.

The Context Associates were assigned to prepare all the survey questions and workshop materials, and then present them to the author in two weeks. The Context Associates completed the surveys and returned to the author with enough time for review. After review, all questions were completed and printed.

On January 2, 2003 the author made contact with the pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church by telephone. Plans were discussed to meet on January 16, 2003 at the Southfield Big Boy restaurant at noon. After the meeting with the pastor, tentative dates were selected for workshop sessions.

On January 24, 2003, a letter was sent to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church congregation inviting and requesting participation of the congregation in the project with the tentative dates for scheduled workshops.

On February 9, 2003 the first phase of the project began. The survey forms were presented at the eight and eleven a.m. church services. Fifteen participants signed up at the morning worship service; sixty signed up at the afternoon service. The following day the

seventy-five participants names were put in a box, a random selection of twenty- five names were chosen. Telephone calls were made to all members selected by the author. As a result, fifteen dedicated participants completed all workshop sessions.

On February 16, 2003, the first workshop session was held and was entitled, "An Introduction and Overview of Grief." The second workshop was held on February 23, 2003 and was entitled, "How to Recognize and Express Your Feelings and Emotions." The third workshop was held on March 2, 2003 and was entitled, "How to Resolve and Process Grief." The fourth workshop, held on March 14, 2003, was a group activity and outing to see the movie *Antoine Fischer*, which was initiated as a suggestion, but the participants wanted to see the movie as a group project. The fifth and final workshop session was entitled "Letting Go and Live."

The Professional Associates suggested that the author select two churches that have lost their pastors and interview three members and compare this with the members who participated in workshop sessions. The task for the Context Associates was to research and identify ten churches that lost their pastor to death and present the list at the next meeting.

The committee presented a list of eight churches at the next meeting. The process began for the selection of the churches. The author identified three churches with whom he was familiar and had a relationship with either the chairman of deacons or trustee chairman. The author contacted the first church only to discover that the church was dealing with many issues and needed more time. In the contact to the second church a message was left.

A few days after leaving the message, the author received a call from a former member of the congregation who was currently the pastor of another church. He provided

a list of five members he felt would be solid candidates. The first three members called agreed to participate in the interviews.

The author contacted Second Canaan Church to explore the possibility of interviewing participants concerning the loss of their pastor. The author contacted the chairman of the deacon board who provided names of several members he felt would be good candidates for interviews. The author randomly selected three names from the list. The three members contacted agreed to participate in the interviews.

The author made telephone contacts with two Funeral Home Directors. After several attempts to contact Mr. Swanson of Swanson Funeral Home dates were arranged to conduct a personal interview. The author contacted Fritz Funeral Home and spoke with the owner who led him to the director, his daughter Christina Fritz. Ms. Christina Fritz scheduled an interview with the author on May 14, 2003.

The author randomly selected participants from the study group for personal interviews for research results. The names used for the selection were taken from the first workshop sign-in list, dated February 16, 2003. Every fifth person on the list was selected to be interviewed by the author.

The participants were called by one of the Context Associates. All of the participants agreed to the interviews. Dates were set and the author called the four participants and conducted separate phone interviews on the chosen dates. Open and closed methods were used to protect the confidentiality of participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The implementation of the project was held at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church located at 13661 Dequindre, in Detroit, Michigan. The church was founded and organized in 1925. The current pastor, Reverend Louis Forsythe II, is the fourth pastor of the church since it was organized. His predecessor, Reverend Odell Jones, died after thirty-two years of ministerial service at Pleasant Grove Church. The church congregation grieved for 90 days and called the current pastor. The grief increased for 60 percent of the congregation after the calling of the new Pastor according to pre-test results.

The workshops lasted five weeks. Initially, the project was scheduled for three weeks. However, due to the excitement and commitment generated by the participants and the recommendations from the author, the workshops were extended two additional weeks. After several attempts to secure a date with the Pastor of the Pleasant Grove Church, it finally came to pass. After meeting with the Pastor to discuss the objectives and secure the dates for the workshop, the Pastor and the author agreed upon Sunday, February 9, 2003, which would be youth day celebration.

During the morning worship service, the presentation of the church survey was accepted by forty-eight members, in which all completed the survey. As a result, fifteen participants signed up for the workshops. The afternoon service was anointed, filled with praise, worship and celebration. The youth conducted the entire services. The youth read

scripture and shared their testimony, the youth choir sang, and the liturgical dancers ministered in dance. The guest speaker was a 30-year-old youth pastor from Chicago Illinois. His anointed message entitled “Live” blessed the author as well as the entire congregation.

During the course of study in the Doctoral Program, it is noted that the student will experience a transformation. The author was transformed on February 9, 2003 during the afternoon worship service. The message was so profound, powerful and prophetic that the author was filled with emotion and wept during the course of the service.

Later, at the conclusion of the service, the author was able to give his testimony concerning the death of his sons and present the project to the congregation. During the service, 267 members completed the survey. As a result, 60 members signed up for the workshops. The total number for both services combine participants equaled 75, which is 23% of the total congregation.

The selection process began as my context associates and I gathered all of the names of participants in a box and randomly selected 25 members. The first 21 agreed to be a participant for the project.

Workshop 1 — Introduction and Overview of Grief (2/16/03)

The first workshop 19 participants attended. The objective of the first workshop was to provide an overview of the entire program and allow the participants to become familiar with the author and disclose their experiences as it relates to grief and loss. The author introduced himself and disclosed his pain through personal loss. The author also introduced the project, the purpose, projected outcomes, overview of upcoming sessions and the reason he decided to do his thesis on bereavement and grief.

The author opened the floor and asked participants to introduce themselves and share their experience. After the formal introductions, the room was full of hurt, pain and emotion. Participants were crying, hugging and comforting one another. At that point, the healing began. The participants were asked why they attended the grief seminar. Some of the responds and emotions expressed by participants are as follows

- One participant stated, “I feared coming to the workshop for fear of opening up old wounds it hurts real badly.”
- “My daughter is having a difficult time accepting the loss of Pastor Jones’ she has not been herself lately.”
- A gentleman stood to express himself and was choked up. He could barely speak. Tearfully he explained the loss of two family members; he quotes “It’s hard; real hard; I lost my wife and son recently.”
- “I lost my dad, aunt, and granddad I’m here to put it all behind me.”
- “Where have you been Reverend Knox? What took you so long to get here? We needed these six months ago.”

After the group completed their introductions, they were given a short break. Shortly thereafter, a pre-test was passed out for each participant to complete. Several books on grief were suggested and passed around for participant to review.

The author lectured on the definitions of grief and passed out handouts on the normal grief as a reaction to significant loss, the grief cycle, and the “grief is cyclical, not linear”(Appendix F). Next, the participants divided into five different groups to discuss a challenging exercise entitled “The History of Loss Graph,” which each participant

completed and discussed among their peer group. Afterward, one member from each group shared their history of loss (Appendix G).

The session closed with prayer with holding hands. Afterward, the members hugged and fellowshiped for another half hour. Participants were happy to know that they were not alone in their grief experience. Many continued to share their story of hurts and disappointment, and some were relieved. Many members were laughing, crying, hugging, encouraging, shaking hands, and rubbing cheeks. The session ended on an emotional zenith.

Workshop 2 — How to recognize and express your feelings and emotions (2/23/03)

The objective of this workshop was to teach the participants how to recognize and acknowledge their positive and negative feelings and effectively express them. Examples of emotions were discussed, followed by excerpts from two movies. The movies *The Color Purple* and *Four Little Girls* provided two extreme emotions.

This workshop was attended by 14 participants. The participants experienced an emotional roller coaster. The group was divided into 4 groups (break-out sessions) consisting of several exercises that allowed the participants to express their innermost feelings and become emotionally involved. (Appendix O). Topics of discussions included:

Do I understand my feelings?

Do I understand myself?

How do I express my feelings?

Are my feelings real?

How do I identify feelings?

The participants' responses to some of the questions were:

"I grew up being taught not to show your feelings or your weakness because people would take advantage of you."

"I used to lash out with anger. I did not know how to control my emotions."

"Men, we usually keep things inside. We are taught not to cry or express emotions."

"I am just beginning to understand the difference between good feelings and bad feelings."

"Black women were taught to be the backbone of the family, to be strong, although we can be hurting inside do not show it."

Several handouts were passed out. The topics were explained and the participants completed the handouts for the session, which included Learning History (Appendix A), and the History of Loss Graph. (Appendix G) Upon completion of the handout, they were discussed, and then passed in for evaluation and review by the author.

Workshop 3 — How to resolve Grief (3/2/2003)(Appendix C)

The objective of this session was to help the participants to see where they are in their process and to move toward healing.

The session got off to a slow start. The author did not anticipate the workshop would continue today. The class began with one student in attendance. The author took advantage of the time and began a personal interview with the participant who agreed to do the interview. The next two participants did not show up until 30 minutes later. 10 minutes later 5 more participants showed up. Although I suggested that the context associate go home, ultimately 16 participants showed up for the workshop. The author

was excited. The participants were ready for discussion. The session began with song and prayer. The room was filled with emotion as the participants began to share their feelings from the last session. Participants began to testify concerning past experiences with losses and how they were still unresolved. The topics of discussion included (Appendix C)

How to resolve grief? (Appendix C)

How much time does it take to resolve?

Are you ready to let go? (Appendix D)

Let go and live your life.

Workshop 4 — Activity, Movie outing (3/14/2003)

The purpose and goal of this workshop was to reflect and review the important scenes from a movie and evaluate how feelings were expressed, depressed or repressed.

Eleven members of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, two Context Associates, one Professional Associate and the author attended the movie, *Antoine Fischer*. The movie allowed the participants to view how others expressed their feelings and disclosed themselves to a professional counselor. The movie was sad, enjoyable, powerful as well as, emotional. After the movie, some of the participants wanted to fellowship over dinner and discuss details of the movie. A few fellowshiped and others went home.

Workshop 5 — Letting Go and Live (3/16/2003)

The purpose of the last session was to teach the participants how to resolve their losses and move forward.

The last session was exciting and emotional. Sixteen participants showed up for this session. The first agenda item was an introduction to journal writing (Appendix J) and

the steps toward creative writing (Appendix K). Participants were assigned to write and share with the class a sample of their journal writings.

A review of the movie, *Antoine Fischer*, was the last agenda item. Many expressed their views of how they saw themselves in the movie and how their emotions were parallel to the main character in the movie, Antoine. The review of the movie proved that many participants, as one of them stated, “need to let go of their feelings and develop the good communication skills in order to express their feelings effectively.” Another participant said “the role playing they performed during the session last week was helpful as they learned to express themselves.”

Afterwards, the post-test (Appendix M) was given for all participants to complete. Each participant was asked to verbally express their feelings at this point and compare them to their feelings from the first session.

- “I feel the class has really helped me, I am not at the same place I have learned that grief is a process, not a fast fix. I can now go step by step; I want to go a little deeper.”
- “I enjoyed the sessions so much. Life is a little easier for me now, when I first came the sessions it was hard. I thank God I was chosen.”
- “God has truly blessed our church to be able to have this type of ministry. I have had several opportunities to discuss the workshop with others who wants to be a part of a workshop such as grief and bereavement.”
- “I have learned so much about grief that I did not know at the beginning of the sessions now I am able to help others.”

The last session ended on an emotional high after the final comments were facilitated by Dr. Oliver Johnson and the author. Prayer was rendered and participants

cried, hugged, held hands, encouraged one another and praised God for being there. One hour later they were still fellowshiping. The final question was asked, “when are we going to get together again? We want to meet at least once a month.” The author replied, “The group could meet to support one another during the difficult periods.” As a result, the group decided to form a bereavement support group. What an awesome experience.

Grief in the Church: A Comparative Analysis

The most common and popular place for grief is in the church. Through research, the author discovered that many grief-stricken church members whose pastor died did not have the resources to meet their emotional psychological, spiritual and congregational grief needs. Surveys concluded that they looked to the Pastor who was no longer available to fulfill that void. During this period, a professional counselor should be considered.

There are three areas that are common challenges for congregations after the death of the pastor. The first and greatest task for most churches is selecting a new pastor. The timing for selection is critical. Secondly, the commitment to continue to carry out ministry by all members is always a challenge. Lastly, the challenge to keep the congregation from division is crucial.

In critical situations such as loss of the pastor, research indicated and several members stated that the results of grief “strengthened the church.” Many of the members bonded during the process. Some were weak in their faith, which led to a split or separation of their ministries within the church.

The author conducted interviews with three members from Second Canaan Missionary Baptist Church whose pastor died and left a void for its members and the

community. As a result, the congregation had to deal with unresolved grief issues. The responses to the questions (Appendix Q) varied depending on the relationship the member shared with their Pastor. The responses are outlined below:

First Participant:

- I suffered from depression when I heard the news that my pastor was dead, it took a long time to accept the fact that I would not see him again.
- I was angry and hurt, and still feel the same way. I cannot get use to it
- My pastor was suffering, it was painful to visit him in the hospital I recall the last words he spoke to me “The Lord answers prayer deacon, you keep on praying.”
- There are no grief interventions within the church to assist the grieving members.

Second Participant:

- I was relieved that Pastor had went home to glory. I did not like seeing him in that state. I accepted his death I was anticipating it any day.
- I was not able to express my feeling to church members. I was afraid to say his name or even quote him because of the negative responses I expected from other members.
- I saw God working during the entire process. God’s will was being done right before my eyes. The task was complete.
- Grief was not discussed, or mentioned in the church.

The author visited True Love Baptist Church where three interviews were conducted. The congregation lost their pastor to illness. The three participants responded according to the relationship shared with the pastor.

- When I heard the news, I was in denial. I did not want to hear it.
- We were real close he was like a father figure. Our relationship was personal like father and daughter
- When I experience other deaths he was always there to console me but no one could console me concerning his death
- The death of the pastor drew the congregation closer to one another and closer to God
- I think many of the congregation members need counseling; can you help us?

Second Participant

- The Pastor prepared many of the members for his death, but it is hard to accept his death. It is hard to lose a family member. I have been depressed for a long time.
- The congregation conducted seven days of prayer, we wanted to be on one accord
- The church has a clearer understanding of God.
- I accepted his death immediately. I knew it was God's will for him to move on, now there is no more suffering.
- I see God as a deliverer from suffering; He blessed us (the church) through this experience.

Third Participant

- The church needs a ministry that will allow the congregation to talk about death like a support group.

The author compared the results from the church participants that attended the workshop sessions with the church participants who did not attend the workshop sessions. The members who attended the workshop sessions began to acquire the coping skills needed to process their grief, whereas the churches where no workshops were conducted suffered more from unresolved grief.

These revelations brought to light how God can use death to unify a church through faith and prayer. All of the participants from each church gave similar responses to a few of the questions as they related to personal grief experienced, also depending on where they were in their grief process.

Anticipatory Grief

All of the churches involved in the project were those whose pastors died due to short and long term illness, therefore the deaths were expected or anticipated. This type of grief is referred to as anticipatory grief. The results, are if someone has had prolonged illness or serious memory impairment the members begin grieving the loss of the person's former self long before the time of death.

According to studies by Malinda Ann Hill, anticipating the loss and knowing what is coming can be just as painful as losing a life. The members may experience guilt or shame for wishing it were over or seeing their loved one as already gone intellectually. It is important to recognize these feelings as normal.

Ultimately, anticipatory grief is a way of allowing the griever to prepare emotionally for the inevitable. According to the surveys conducted, 74% of the congregation's members were prepared.

Gender Grief

The workshops survey results indicated that women make up 75% of the church membership. Furthermore, 85% of the workshop participants were women. This project revealed that there is a difference in the way women deal with and process grief, compared to men. There is a lack of agreement as to the effects of gender differences on grief and bereavement outcomes. Stephen Shuchter notes "that each gender uses their own strength to deal with grief."¹ Catherine Sanders states "the gender difference in the expression of bereavement becomes more pronounced as adults mature and have experience with loss."

While conducting interviews and researching gender grief and bereavement, the author discovered several similar patterns that are consistent with a study conducted by Martin and Doka concerning gender grief. They have noted that masculine grief can be described by the following patterns:

- Feelings are limited or toned down
- Thinking precedes and often dominates feeling
- The focus is on problem solving rather than expression of feelings
- The outward expression of feelings often involves anger and/or guilt
- Internal adjustments to the loss are usually expressed through activity

¹ Shuchter, *Dimensions of Grief*.

- Intense feelings may be expressed privately; there is a general reluctance to discuss these feelings with others
- Intense grief is usually expressed immediately after the loss, often during the post death rituals

Feminine grief has been shown to have these characteristics:

- Can express anguish in tears and laments
- Is socialized to be nurturing and empathetic
- Is not afraid to discuss grief
- Seeks support
- Has difficulty expressing anger
- Is prone to guilty feelings
- Is caregiver to friends and family
- Is keeper of the family circle

Carl Jung notes, “many men have been raised to not talk, cry, or reach out for support. Therefore, their grief tends to stay inside and can create physical ailments, as studies have shown heart attacks, ulcers and cancer are a few of the physical ailments that can be created when the grief stays within.”²

Carol Staudacher in her book entitled *Men and Grief* demonstrates how typical males and females respond to death. Her research shows that men have established four typical male coping styles that are legitimate and acceptable alternatives to working

² Catherine Sanders, *Grief The Mourning After* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999).

through grief. These patterns have enabled them to take advantage of their natural gifts and talents.³

1. Remain silent: they will keep the pain to themselves; they appear to not need to communicate about their grief. The non-communication helps them protect themselves against being vulnerable, which to them is expressing grief through tears, feelings, sharing.
2. Engaging in “Secret Grief”: This is a method of solitary mourning” activities, i.e. taking the new puppy for a walk. The puppy represents new life.
3. Taking physical and legal action: many men immediately attempt to bring control to an out-of-control situation by taking physical and legal action for extended periods of time.
4. Becoming immersed in activity: most men become obsessive about activity. They diligently find things to occupy their time—all of it.

These examples proved that the copings style and skills vary depending upon experience and growth and maturity of the individual.

Grief of a Family Loss of a Loved One

The author conducted interviews on female gender with the deceased Pastor’s family consisting of three females; two daughters and the pastor’s wife. The first interview was conducted with the grieving wife. We met for lunch at a location where the environment was conducive for dialogue. She was cordial, inviting and open for good conversation.

³ Carol Staudacher, *Men and Grief* (Oakland, California: New Harbinger Publications, 1991).

I informed her that I would ask five simple questions (Appendix N) as it relates to accepting the death of her husband Pastor and her needs being met. She stated that, after being married 40 years, she accepted the death and was relieved because he suffered a long time. "I am happy he has no more pain. I am coping by praying, reading and depending on my friends to support me through this dark hour. Everything has changed my whole life has change. It is going to be hard after being with someone for so long but God has brought me through, he knows my needs and he supplies them. I can't stop living; I must go on with my life. So many people have done many things to remember my husband I am so grateful."

"I have two daughters and one of them is taking it hard she just can't seem to accept the fact that her father is gone. I need for you to talk to her. I have to be strong for both of them. His death has brought us closer in fact it has brought the congregation closer." After the interview, she stated, "I needed to talk to someone other than friends or church members concerning my husbands death. I wanted to talk to someone who had no opinion, who would just listen."

The second interview was conducted with the eldest daughter in a similar environment. She expressed that her "first reaction was anger and disappointment, reflecting how could this happen so soon, he could have lived a little while longer. I had a hard time dealing with reality. It has been almost a year now and we have not removed anything from his home office or bedroom.

I do not think my sister and mother is taking it well. They both consume themselves with their work so they won't have to deal with it."

She explained that she was prepared to accept the Lord's will because he had been sick for such a long period of time. She expressed how she felt during the process of waiting and anticipating his death.

While interviewing the participants for the project, the author discovered each family member expressed their own separate grief experience. They were all suffering with various spiritual, emotional and psychological pain due in part to the different relationship each shared with the pastor/husband/father. Thus, everyone grieves differently, depending on their age and growth as a Christian and more importantly depending on their relationship with God.

Grief in the Funeral Homes

Interviews were conducted with two Funeral Home Directors by the author. The questions were related to types of grief and resources available to mourners (see Appendix). Both directors had similar answers as it relates to styles of grief and bereavement during their process.

Many funeral homes do not offer grief counseling due to the fact many families do not have insurance that will cover the cost. According to one director, grief and/or mental health insurance is not affordable for the majority of people. The funeral homes had no written materials to distribute as it related to the process of grief. The results of the interviews revealed the need for grief counselors before, during and after funeral services.

Corporate Grief

Corporate grief has overwhelmed and consumed grievers throughout history. Many events, which resulted in death and loss, have left the world grieving. The author

reflects upon various historical grief events of his time. The death of loved ones from the bombing of Pearl Harbor caused the world to grieve. The death of President John F. Kennedy left the nation in mourning. The death of our leader Martin Luther King Jr. again left the nation grieving.

From the prophet Ezekiel to the 9/11 tragedy, nations have grieved corporately. In the wake of the Columbia Space Shuttle tragedy, many children, youth, families and communities experienced a sense of public grief and loss. Moreover, the untimely death of a Pastor leaves a congregation and community in the season of grief.

Corporate grief begins to take on a life of its own. This type of grief has a unique way of changing the behavior and attitude of griever when they share the common loss as a body or collective group. The spirit of concern, comfort and compassion towards one another seem to be the focus when death and crisis occur. The results are unbelievable.

The residents of this country often show support and compassion to one another by getting involved on a personal level. Many send money, cards, floral arrangements, and some even set up memorials for the victims, friends, co-workers, family members and people they do not even know. One compassionate person stated "we cannot keep people from having crises and problems, but we can be there to help them through it."

During the most recent 9/11 tragedy, various churches and community organizations developed grief and crisis teams to meet the needs of the griever. Many people became volunteers for family victims serving in areas providing food, shelter, medical supplies, counseling and compassion.

The author has witnessed people expressing love to each other who would not otherwise have loved. In addition, it allows the griever to forgive people they would not

have otherwise forgiven. It also allows people to hug people they would not ordinarily hug.

The participants of the workshop expressed that they had an opportunity to fellowship and get acquainted and come to love members who share some of the same pains and hurts.

Pastoral Supervision

The results of the workshops were fruitful and multiple. The project could not have succeeded without the assistance of the Professional and Context Associates. They worked as individuals as well as a team. Therefore, supervision was required before and during and after the project for all associates involved.

Direct individual supervision was implemented after the third workshop due to the assertiveness of the workshop participants who began to develop a bereavement committee and support group to meet the immediate needs of members who suffer from grief.

The author was chosen by the committee to be an advisor to meet with the steering committee to help craft the ministry. Although the pastor of the church did not have time to lend to this ministry, he agreed to the advisory appointments. Pastoral supervision was chosen as the resource in which the participant's commitment could be accomplished. The task was to help the teams understand what pastoral supervision offered to the ministry as well as provide focus.

Kenneth Pohly's contribution in this field has been very helpful to the author in this process. Pohly states in his book transforming, "that pastoral supervision is a way of doing ministry where people are covenanted together to promote growth in self-awareness,

ministering competence, theological understanding, and faith commitment.”⁴ He further states that supervision ministry is much like the supervision of any other profession or occupation. “It involves human relationships, contractual agreements, goal setting, performance objectives, intentionality, accountability, evaluation and more.”⁵

⁴ Kenneth Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision* (Dayton, OH: Whaleprints, 1993).

⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

*Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.
(I Thessalonians 5:11)*

When the author began this Doctor of Ministry project, he had no idea how much of an impact this project would have, not only on his ministry, but also his life. In addition, he had no idea how much spiritual, psychological, and therapeutic impact it had on the lives of others who participated in the project.

Being able to share one another's grief experience allowed the participants to disclose more information than anticipated, according to a few of the participants. The bonding that developed during the group sessions allowed the participants to provide comfort to one another. The author contends all who were involved—the participants, the Context Associates, the Professional Associates and the author—were changed during the process of the sessions.

On reflection, the project has led the author to a definitive focus in his ministry, as well as, the context and professional associates. The author now understands his purpose and what God requires. The author is reminded of the prophet who spoke these words in Micah 6:8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Knowing this one thing, it is God himself who has shown us what we must do. First, being kind to those who need us, show them mercy, further to humble ourselves and serve his people.

Summary

The data collected from the project, such as the church surveys, pre and post tests and post interviews with participants, indicated that 80% of the griever who lost their pastor as a result of death continue to suffer from unresolved grief and will need additional interventions to start their healing process. The remaining 20% have begun the process of grief through a variety of interventions such as counseling, support groups and prayer.

Many in the latter group have indicated they have accepted the death of their pastor which has led to the disclosure of other related issues, such as death of family members. In addition, this group has moved closer to resolving and bringing closure their death-related issues

Research also indicated that more women process, seek professional help and move towards closure of grief more rapidly and more often than their spouses and male counterparts. In addition, research revealed available resources such as professional counseling, written information such as billboards, brochures, flyers and posters advertising and promoting grief awareness are needed in the grief community. It is important that the resources be highlighted in both funeral homes and local churches to help meet the needs of the bereaved.

The author is pleased as he reflects upon the greatest result of this project, which was the development of the grief and bereavement ministry developed by the participants from the workshop at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. It is the prayer and hope of the author that a grief and bereavement ministry could be developed in all churches and community centers to meet the needs of griever throughout the church and local

community as a whole. It is imperative to acknowledge the pain and suffering that exist in the homes, community, church and the world as a result of death and loss.

The world needs more ministers, deacons, missionaries, counselors, and volunteers who are compassionate, loving, reliable, accepting, faithful, kind, inviting, nurturing, and involving if we are determined to make a difference as the church, community and the world continues to experience the pain, agony and suffering associated with grief and bereavement.

Also, during the course of this project the author was in transition in various areas of his life. There were three transitions that accorded during the phase of the project that helped the author grow to a different level. First, the author moved and relocated from the community where he and his family spent the last 23 years.

Second, the author was assigned to Metropolitan Baptist Church in June 2002, departing the church where he spent the past 15 years in ministry. Thirdly, a new career move caused him to move to a new work location out of the city where the author had worked the length of his career. Finally, the author learned through experience that transformation is continuous and therapeutic. The effect of the transitions has changed the focus and course of the author's ministry and life professionally, emotionally and spiritually.

The three transitions impacted the project, which caused the author to modify his teaching approach. As a result the author was transformed and renewed in mind, body and spirit. The effect of all this has transformed his ministry, as well as those who labored with him. Furthermore, God has truly worked miracles as the author learned two professional associates and one context associate also had transformations in their ministries during the project.

Recommendations

Upon completion of the workshops, the author realized there was not enough class time to allow the participants to share all of their pains and sorrows from loss of loved ones in the past. The author concludes that ongoing workshops should be conducted for participants to disclose more information that could help bring closure to various issues and more available resources needed to measure more accurate results.

The first recommendation was expressed by more than half of the participants who suggested an eight-week course with at least two classes focusing on expression of feelings, two on group participation, and at least two sessions on resolving and closure.

The author discovered that grief and bereavement courses were limited throughout the immediate Detroit Metropolitan area faith-based community. I recently attended a traditional funeral service where many were grieving but there were restrictions on time. Mourners expressed their grief through remarks during the program that limited their time to 2 minutes, which did not help bring closure to their grief issues. Therefore, further recommendations are needed for churches and funeral homes. They include the following.

- Make available professional counselors or chaplains in churches to provide grief counseling
- Increased counseling staff at Funeral Homes
- Increase grief information in churches and Funeral homes (brochures, posters)
- Develop clear and definitive roles of bereavement committees in churches
- Increase available resources for the grieving /bereaved
- Develop and implement grief or health centers in churches

- Develop community outreach programs that meet the needs of the grieved and bereaved (such as Grief Center).

Conclusion

The hypothesis for the project was that persons electing to access grief-related care would experience significant levels of healing and recovery. In conclusion, the research project supports my hypothesis because the participants who completed the workshops experienced significant levels of healing and recovery; whereas, the participants from the other churches who were interviewed by phone and who did not attend the workshops suffered more from unresolved grief.

Further, participants and non-participants both suffer from unresolved grief due to the fact that neither sought available resources. Both groups were at different stages of their grief process according to education, socio-economic status, gender, age and level of faith.

The congregation survey results showed that, of participants and non-participants, forty-five percent of the African American females in the church between the ages 35-45 were at the acceptance stage before the workshop began.

Moreover, grief affects everyone unequally. Everyone grieves differently. Some people are severely affected and suffer setbacks, whereas others seemingly take it in stride, acknowledging the loss but somehow managing to go on with their lives.

It is the author's hope that those who face grief will be able to use the material in the brochure to begin their healing through the grief process. Although each of us will face some loss in this life, we each have to find a way to survive this experience.

The author contends it is possible that we all can heal, grow and be transformed in some new way because of our loss. We will mature. We may deepen our relationships with others. We may preach, teach or reach. We should therefore, appreciate our lives and grow to understand our purpose, which is to love and provide comfort to those who grieve.

In conclusion, the author prays for each of us as we grieve; let us understand that God is preparing us to minister to the world by comforting them with our grief experience. Finally, let us reflect upon the words of the Apostle Paul: "Knowing that God is our comfort and comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:4).

APPENDIX A
LEARNING HISTORY

LEARNING HISTORY

1. What did you learn from your family that you have carried on in how you interact with people, the community (POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE)?

2. How do you deal with your emotions?

3. How do you deal with anger?

4. How would you rate your self-esteem?

5. How do you take care of yourself?

6. What are the consequences of your behaviors?

7. What are your choices?

8. What changes do you need to continue working on in order to reach your goals?

APPENDIX B
LOSSES/OPPORTUNITIES

LOSSES/OPPORTUNITIES

Sometimes changes in life, even positive changes, result in losses. When you experience a loss it is important to work through the associated thought and feelings. This working through is called grieving. Grief is a normal and natural response to loss. People grieve over death of someone they love and sometimes over life changes including changes in family patterns or behavior. Grieving is related to adjusting and adapting.

Examples of situations which may facilitate grieving include:

1. Children starting school
2. Children going away to school
3. Marriage
4. Divorce
5. Addictions
6. Retirement

The negative or losses in each of these situations seems pretty easy to pick out. Can you pick out the potential positive? Quite often with losses also comes opportunity, and you need to be prepared to look for it. There are stages to the grieving process:

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Despair
5. Acceptance

These stages do not occur in the same order for everyone.

APPENDIX C
WHAT IS MEANT BY RESOLVING GRIEF/LOSS?

WHAT IS MEANT BY RESOLVING GRIEF/LOSS?

1. Claiming your circumstances instead of them claiming you (discuss what this means).
2. Being able to enjoy fond memories without having the precipitation of painful feelings of loss, guilt, regret or remorse.
3. Finding new meaning in living, and living without fear of future abandonment.
4. Acknowledging that it is okay to feel bad from time to time, and to talk about those feelings.
5. Being able to forgive others when they say or do things that you know are based on a lack of knowledge and understanding.

WHY ARE PEOPLE NOT PREPARED TO DEAL WITH LOSS?

1. They have been taught to acquire things not to lose them.
2. They have been taught that acquiring things will help them feel complete or whole.
3. They have been taught that if they lose something replacing the loss will make it easier (i.e., bury their feelings).

WHAT ARE THE MYTHS OF DEALING WITH LOSS?

1. Put off until later to do things that are frightening or painful.
2. Regret the past (get stuck wanting if different, better, or more).
3. Just give it time.
4. Grieve alone (don't need to talk about thoughts or feelings).

Two major issues: bury your feelings and forget the loss.

APPENDIX D
HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE READY?

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE READY?

1. You have acknowledged that a problem exists.
2. You have acknowledged that the problem is associated with the loss.
3. You acknowledged that you are now willing to deal with your loss.

FINDING THE SOLUTION: THE FIVE STAGES OF RECOVERING LOSS:

1. Growing Awareness-that issues are unresolved
2. Accepting Responsibility-for resolving the loss
3. Identifying-what you need to do to resolve the loss
4. Taking action-to resolve the loss
5. Moving beyond Loss-through sharing with others and taking action which facilitates resolution and growth.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH LOSS?

People deal with loss in various ways. Do you identify with any of the following examples?

1. Intellectualize-don't deal with feelings, don't talk or write about how they feel
2. Be fine and put on a happy face for those around you "Academy Award Winning Recovery."
3. Want the approval of others; want others to be accepting of your feelings.
4. Acting out ("don't expect anything of me because I hurt so badly")

OTHER WAYS?

Write about how you have dealt with the loss(es) you have experienced, and be prepared to discuss it.

APPENDIX E
GRIEF CYCLE

GRIEF CYCLE (WHERE ARE YOU STUCK?)

DEFINITION: THE NATURAL EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE LOSS OF A CHERISHED IDEA, PERSON, OR THING.

1. DENIAL (Isolation)

A. Powerlessness

B. Psychological Buffer (defense)-protects knowledge or awareness of thoughts that you feel are not ready to deal with mentally, emotionally, or Spirituality

C. Denial of Reality

1. The more you have depended on the last object, the stronger your denial

2. ANGER (Self-Disappointment, Self-Hatred)

A. Anger over loss and not being able to find it

1. Regrets

B. Can be destructive if not expressed in healthy ways

1. Out of control anger = rage, violence

2. Held in, stuffed anger = out of control physical illness

A. anger turned inward toward self = Depression

b. Despair, suicide

3. BARGAINING (Postponing the inevitable. Attempt to control the uncontrollable)

A. "What If's" and "If Only"

B. Desperate attempt to regain control

C. Keeps you from facing reality

D. Destructive if one gets stuck here

4. DEPRESSION (Sorrow, Despair)

A. Anger channeled back into self, turned inward against self

B. Response typically associated with grief but actually only one part of the whole process

1. Tears, funerals, wakes allow you to be sad
2. Trapped (stuck) sorrow = self-pity leads to destructive behavior
3. Can be immobilizing = total helplessness
4. Crying is a good way to express sorrow. It washes away sadness. Heals. Is a sign of strength when used as part of the grieving process, but if stuck crying can become a chronic behavior which does not effectively promote grieving

5. ACCEPTANCE

A. Final goal with achieving resolution of grief

B. Belief that it is possible to heal and recover

C. Surrender to reality

D. Recognition of responsibility = ACTION

APPENDIX F
GRIEF

GRIEF

Grief is intense emotional suffering caused by a loss. When unresolved, it can lead to acute anxiety and depression. Usually when we think of loss and the grief process, we think of someone very close to us dying or leaving. When this happens, we experience intense emotional pain (hurt, sadness). So we can say that grief is the natural, normal, inevitable process that all human beings experience when they lose something that is important to them. The stages of grief are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

The varying things that a person can experience during the course of their life that can result in feelings grief and loss include:

1. Death of a loved one.
2. The ending of an important relationship (boyfriend-girlfriend).
3. Loss of relationship with a parent through divorce.
4. Feelings of loss for a friend that moved away (or you moved away).
5. Feelings of loss associate with school, neighbors, house, etc. because you moved away.
6. Loss of your job due to restructuring, lack of transportation, drinking, etc.
7. Loss of your special place in the family because another child was born.
8. Damaged reputation due to someone who doesn't like you, your own poor judgment, mistakes, etc.
9. Physical impairment-accident illness.
10. Loss of a pet.
11. Not being able to return to school, friends, family, or spouse for some reason.
12. Recognizing that life dreams will not be realized.
13. Others _____

What are the things that you may have wanted to happen that never occurred and you feel hopeless about.

NEVER HAPPENED

1. Happy childhood.
2. Normal or happy home perhaps like a friend has or you saw on TV or a movie.
3. To belong to a certain group.
4. Get a particular person to care about you.
5. Parents you didn't have.
6. A beautiful or great body (according to the narrow and damaging social perspective that slim is okay and any variation from that is not as good as...).
7. A smooth and clear complexion (this can be a painful experience).
8. Color of hair or eyes (not accepting of self).
9. Parents that were home or spent time with you or didn't get drunk and abusive.
10. Grandparents.

From this place of pain, hurt, and disappointment comes a wall of protection called *denial*:

1. I don't care.
2. It's not really that.
3. Who wants to it anyway?
4. Everyone does it.
5. There's no problem.
6. Drugs aren't my problem.

When we quit denying our loss, we move into the next stage: ANGER. Your anger may be reasonable or unreasonable and it may be felt in varying degrees.

Hate	Rage	Anger	Frustrated
Hurt	Upset	Irritated	

This is a stage where blaming occurs. Perhaps distrust, revenge, or get even. Externalization takes place—"It's all his fault."

Make a list of all the people, places, and things that you are angry about to some degree.

BARGAINING

When anger begins to calm down there is an attempt to bargain with:

1. Life
2. Ourselves
3. Another person
4. God
 - A. I'll try harder to please...
 - B. Maybe if I had...
 - C. Bargaining in attempt to postpone the inevitable; in attempt to prevent it.

DEPRESSION

It begins when there is realization that bargaining has not worked, the struggle to ward off reality, and the belief that the experience has been unfair an overwhelming depression can take over. This is when the full force of the loss is experience and is accompanied by crying, and intense emotional pain. Feelings associated with this stage include:

1. Helpless
2. Powerless
3. Self-pity-Why me?
4. Sadness
5. Guilt
6. Suicidal thoughts
7. Self-destructive or self-defeating behavior.

ACCEPTANCE

This is the last stage of the grieving process. Acceptance is not necessarily a happy stage.

It is almost void of feeling. It is as if the pain is gone and the struggle is over. There is peace, but it does not mean that healing is complete or the feelings of emptiness are gone.

1. At peace
2. Learn coping skills
3. Accept our past
4. Accept life as it is
5. Accept our present circumstances
6. Accept our loss
7. Free to go on with your life
8. Begin to feel comfortable with your life again
9. Adjusting
10. Set new goals
11. May strive for some understanding of the loss
12. Stop avoiding issues associated with the loss or rumination about the loss

Are you or someone in your life going through this grief process for a major loss?
What stage do you think you are in?

Review your life and consider the major losses and changes you have gone through. Recall your experience with the grief process. Write about your feelings as you remember them.

APPENDIX G
HISTORY OF LOSS GRAPH

HISTORY OF LOSS GRAPH

On your graph write:

- 1. What happened?
- 2. When did it happen?

Below your graph write about:

- 1. How did it affect your life?
- 2. What issues do you now have to resolve?

EXAMPLE:

Year	1977	1980	1981	1987
loss	lost job	Father died	son went off to college	spouse had an affair
year				
loss				

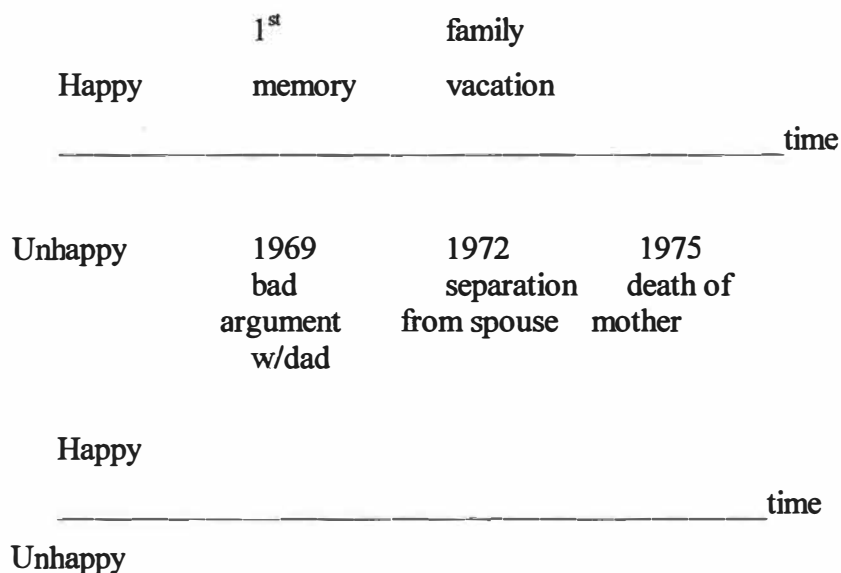
APPENDIX H
RELATIONSHIP GRAPH

RELATIONSHIP GRAPH

Above the time line write down the happy experiences, and below the line write the unhappy experiences. Start with your first conscious memory or recollection of a loved one. Include on your graph relationships with people, things, or changes.

1. How many positive experiences were never acknowledged or talked about?
2. How many negative events were never acknowledged or talked about?
3. Did you become aware of other unspoken communications, either things you wish you had heard or things you wish you had said?

EXAMPLE:



APPENDIX I
IS LIFE WHAT YOU MAKE IT?

IS LIFE WHAT YOU MAKE IT?

1. Write about what the following statements mean.
2. Do you apply this type of attitude/perspective to your life?

If yes-how do you apply it to your life?

If no-how do you go about changing it?

SOMETHING LOST-SOMETHING GAINED

IS YOUR CUP HALF EMPTY OR HALF FULL

APPENDIX J
JOURNAL WRITING

JOURNAL WRITING

Sometime changes can occur just by recognizing the source of the problem. However, most changes come from an accumulation of changes in beliefs, priorities, and behaviors over a period of time. Consistency and an investment in yourself is necessary. Journal writing can be useful for keeping track of a wide variety of things that can help you achieve your goals. Use your journal to record your thoughts and feelings and writing about them can increase self-understanding, and self-awareness, which can make it easier to change old patterns of behavior and to start new ones. Consistency keeping a journal is a strong message to yourself that you want to change and you are committed to make it happen.

People often experience greater success when they have established goals.

Unpredictable situations do not occur which can cause setbacks, but they can also allow for a reevaluation of your problems and can offer an opportunity. However, when the goals are defined and the unexpected happens, you are more likely to reach them even if you are initially thrown off course. Most people don't clearly establish their goals, let alone write them down and think about what it will take to accomplish them.

APPENDIX K
JOURNAL WRITING STEPS

Journal Writing Steps

STEP 1

Write down the goals you want to accomplish in the next 12 months. Make them as specific as possible. They should be realistic, but also challenging.

STEP 2

Write down ten goals you want to accomplish this month. These should help you move toward some of your goals for the year. The monthly goals should be smaller and more detailed than the yearly goals.

STEP 3

Write down three goals you want to accomplish today. Goals need to be accompanied by plans to make them happen. If your goals are too large, you are likely to stop before you start. Better to start small and build upward. Small successes build big successes.

STEP 4

Self-monitoring: Keep track of where you are now. Create realistic plans that can get you to your goals.

STEP 5

Begin observing which self-talk has been maintaining the old patterns you want to change. List at least five to ten negative self-statements that feed into your old patterns.

STEP 6

List five to ten positive statements that are likely to help create the new patterns you want to create.

STEP 7

Create the challenges that will replace the negative self-talk you listed in Step 5.

STEP 8

Programming new healthy self-talk. Each day, say at least ten positive self-statements to yourself.

STEP 9

Imagination and visualization: Five times each day, take one minute to visualize a positive image.

STEP 10

Building self-esteem: Use your journal to list good things about yourself. Be supportive to yourself.

STEP 11

Each day record three of the days successes-big or small. Praise yourself. Plan small rewards for some accomplishment each week.

STEP 12

In your journal, frequently ask what parts of yourself you are involved with. The various issues you face (e.g., the needy child, the rebellious adolescent, etc.).

STEP 13

Each day, forgive yourself for something you have done. Like self-esteem, forgiveness is one of the keys to successful change. Forgiving yourself for past actions allows you to take responsibility for what happens in the future.

STEP 14

List the fears of success that the different parts of you may have. Work on making success safe.

STEP 15

Be willing to do things differently. If you don't, nothing is going to change.

APPENDIX L
PRE TEST

PRE-TEST

1. In your **first** personal experience with death what or who did you lose? (specify)
2. How did you feel about the loss?
3. How did you express your feelings?

4. In your most **recent** experience with the death what or who did you lose? (specify)
5. How did you feel about the loss?
6. How did you express your feelings?

7. When you were a child, how was death talked about?
 - a) Openly
 - b) With some sense of discomfort
 - c) As though it was taboo
 - d) Never recall any discussion
8. Have you ever had previous counseling?

9. What are your goals for the future?

10. What do you want to happen?

11. Where is God in your loss experience?

12. What is your understanding of how God views your loss?

13. How has your loss affected you?

APPENDIX M
POST TEST

POST-TEST

Sessions later...

How do you feel about the loss?

How do you express your feelings?

Do you need addition counseling?

What are your goals for the future?

What do you want to happen?

Do you view your loss differently now that you have participated in these workshops?

As a result of being in these workshops, has your understanding of God changed?

APPENDIX N
QUESTIONS FOR THE FAMILY

Questions for the family

As a family member how are you feeling now?

Have you been able to express your true feelings as it relates to the loss?

Express your feelings about the man (father/pastor/husband) the good and bad.

Are there any words you did not have a chance to express while he lived.

Have you lost anyone closer to you than your father/pastor/husband?

You knew he was sick how did you feel when he passed?

How did the death impact you as a family member?

What impact did the death have on the congregation?

How are you coping with this loss?

Is this the greatest loss for you?

APPENDIX O
EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS/EMOTIONS

Expression of Feelings/Emotions

The feeling question is asked more than any other used today, it is also the most misunderstood or misinterpreted question/ we often ask, “ How are you feeling?” When we should ask What are you feeling? In today’s society we use the word “feel” to mean believe or think”. ‘I *feel* she should have done this,” and I *feel* that his idea was better.

The national high percentage of ulcer suffers, cardiac conditions, and allergy victims are found predominantly among individuals who cannot successfully handle their own emotional feelings. Our culture brand emotions... as childish, immature, or neurotic.

Emotions, of course, are never any of these. Emotions/feelings are the basic equipment of human beings in their reactions to life. They are the part of human beings, which distinguish them from a computer, the part which makes them human and responsive, sensitive and creative. The only unhealthy feeling /emotion is an artificial emotion...one used in order to manipulate or control another person; or an emotion used out of context of the current situation as when an individual experience a loss and continues to say “I’m fine or I’m Okay.”

APPENDIX P
GROUP SESSIONS

GROUP SESSIONS

Do I understand my feelings?

Do I understand myself?

How do I express my feelings?

Do I effectively communicate my feelings?

Are my feelings real?

Group Exercise Name that feeling?

APPENDIX Q
CONGREGATION SURVEY

PLEASANT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY/CIRCLE ONE

1. How did you feel upon hearing of the Pastors death?

Angry, Sad, Peacefulness, Upset, Depressed, Numbness, Relieved, Don't Know

2. If you had to choose one, which would apply, to you?

Anger, Sadness, Peacefulness, Upset, Depression, Numb, Relieved, Don't Know

3. How many deaths have you experienced in the past 2 years?

Be specific (Family member, Friend, Neighbor, Church member, other)

4. What stage are you in your grief process? The stages are

(Denial anger depression bargaining acceptance)

5. What is your age range? 10-12 13-17 18-25 26-34 35-45 46-55 56-over

6. What is your Gender: Male_____ Female_____

7. What is your race? Black_____ White_____ Hispanic_____ Other_____

8. Would you be willing to participate in a 3-day workshop? The workshops
 would consist of the following topics.....

1) An overview of how to cope with grief and loss.

2) How to express feelings from grief.

3) How to process and resolve grief.

PLEASE NOTE ALL RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

If you have an interest in workshop complete form

NAME: _____

PHONE # () _____

APPENDIX R
SCRIPTURES OF COMFORT

Scriptures of Comfort

Is. 66:13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

2 Co. 1:3. Blessed *be* God, even the Father our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

Mt. 9:22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Lu. 7:13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

Jn. 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe God, believe also in me.

Jn. 14:18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Jn. 16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Is. 40:1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

1 Co. 14:31. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

2 Co. 2:7. So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

1 Th. 5:11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

1 Th. 5:14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

APPENDIX S
GRIEF BROCHURE

PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT GUIDE

**Blessed be God, even
the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the
Father of mercies, and
the God of all comfort;
who comforts us in all
our tribulation, that we
may be able to comfort
them which are in any
trouble, by the comfort
wherewith we ourselves
are comforted of God.
II Corinthians 1:3,4**

You know when you
can't get over the loss,
separation and death of a
loved one.

You may feel depressed,
anxiety, insomnia (can't
sleep), irritated, angry,
lack of concentration and
stress.

Do you suffer from these symptoms?

- **Decreased
energy**
- **Problems
falling asleep**
- **Problems
concentrating**
- **Feeling
depressed**
- **You may be
grieving**

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT

- Depression
- Stress
- Feelings of
hopelessness
- Loss of appetite
- Feelings of guilt
- Changes in sleeping
patterns
- Fatigue

WHAT KIND OF EVENTS CAN LEAD TO GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

- Death of a loved
one
- Divorce and
separation
- Retirement or
loss of a job
- Separation from
school
- Move into a new
home
- Move from an
old neighborhood

PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS

Everyone has probably experienced loss, separation or detachment at some time in their life, and it is normal to go through a period of adjustment after their loss. Peaceful Solutions can assist you through the process. Grief is a condition that's treatable.

Learning more about grief and the treatment options available is the first step towards healing and recovery. This manual can help answer some of your questions.

What you can do right now.

1. Make an appointment to visit your doctor or therapist to find out if you are suffering from grief or depression.
2. Find someone you can confide in. It is important to have someone you can turn to for support.
3. Call Peaceful Solutions we can help.

**CALL
1-800-MY-GRIEF**

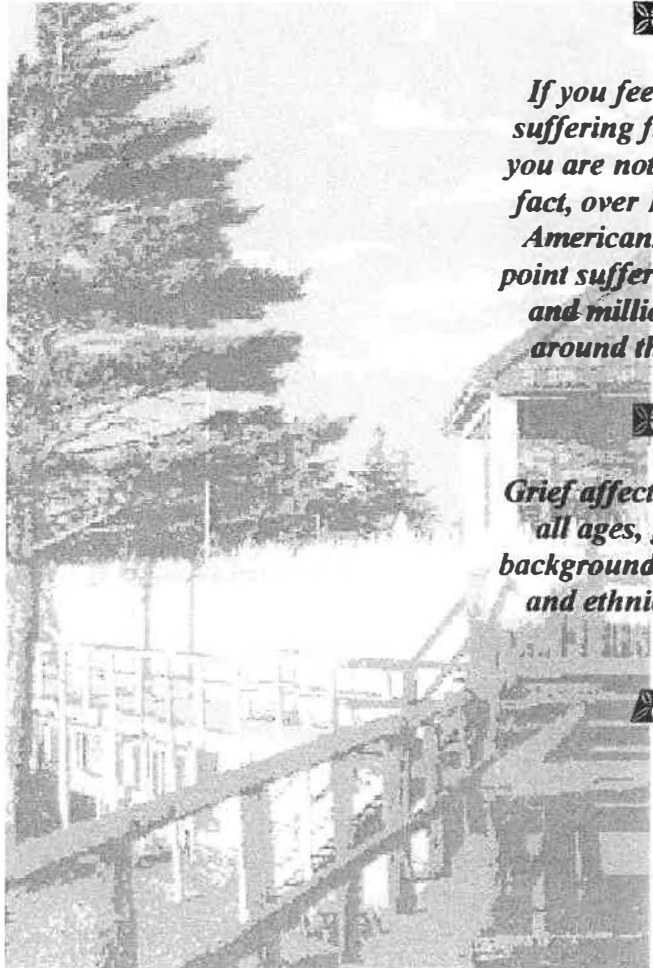
**What is grief?
Grief is intense
emotional suffering
caused by a loss.
When unresolved it
can lead to acute
anxiety and
depression.
Could you be
suffering from grief
or bereavement?**

HOW TO PROCESS GRIEF THE FOUR STEP 4F PROCESS

**FACE THE GRIEF
(Acceptance,
Acknowledge)
FEEL THE GRIEF
(Expression, Sharing)
FUEL THE GRIEF
(Releasing, Purifying)
FREE THE GRIEF
(Surrender)**

TREATMENT

- ✓ Psychotherapy
(counseling)
- ✓ Medication
- ✓ Relaxation Therapy
- ✓ Join a Support
Group



If you feel you are suffering from grief, you are not alone. In fact, over 13 million Americans at some point suffer from grief and millions more around the world.

Grief affects people of all ages, genders, backgrounds, lifestyles and ethnic groups.

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